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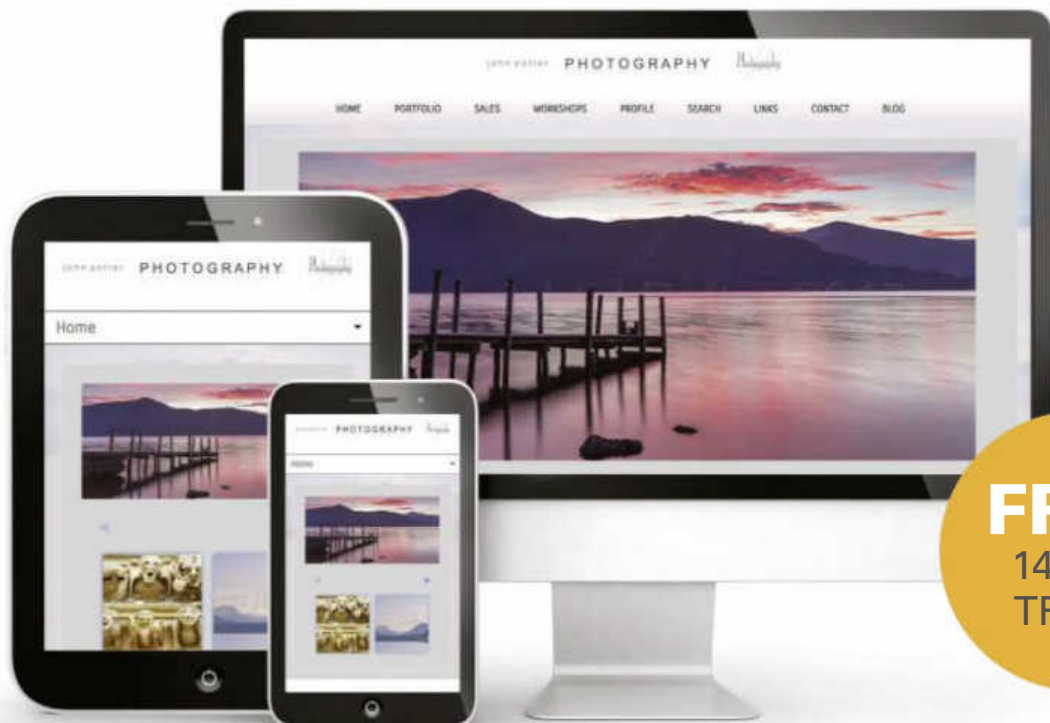


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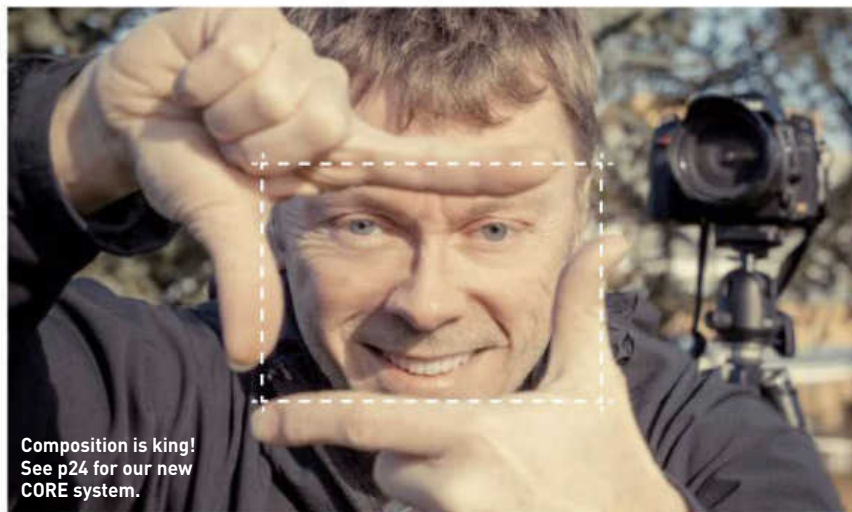
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WELCOME FROM THE EDITOR



Composition is king!
See p24 for our new
CORE system.

Composition is the most important skill in photography, and is the biggest factor that separates genuine photographers from people who have cameras. You may think that successful framing is an innate gift bestowed on the few, but it's actually a technique that can be learned. This month, we reveal a brand new method for improving composition that breaks down the process of effective framing into four simple steps.

Digital Photo's **CORE** system focuses on Content, Orientation, Rules and Enhancement, and by using it, you'll think about your pics in a different way and quickly start to capture better shots. Turn to p24 to see how it works, and after you've read the feature, you can

start putting CORE into practice straight away and see the difference it makes!

We've got some exciting stuff for you on the image-editing front, too. From action-movie portraits in Photoshop to classic black & white techniques in Lightroom, you'll find a barrage of great projects to help you create striking images. And to make sure you absorb all the mouse-clicks along the way, every project has its own video lesson on the CD, so you can sit back and watch the whole thing come together on screen.

Enjoy this packed issue, and I'll see you next month...

Jon

Jon Adams, Editor
jon.adams@bauermedia.co.uk

ON OUR COVER

This month's cover image was captured by Husham Alasadi. The Baghdad-based photographer captured this jetty at sunset while on holiday in Turkey using his Nikon D800E paired with a 16-35mm lens. See more of Husham's great work at 500px.com/hushamphoto



Improve every shot you take

3 ways to get better photos this month



1 Creative shooting ideas to boost your skills

See how to set up your camera for amazing abstract reflection shots on p50.



FREE
EFFECTS
KIT ON CD

2 Inspiring Photoshop projects for better pics

Find out how to create exciting fragmentation effects using our free brush kit on p68.



3 Reviews you can trust on the latest gear

Shoulder bags are a must for quick access to your shooting kit, and we test six on p108.

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Never miss an issue of the UK's best photo mag – see p22

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Inspiring Ideas

8 Planet photo

Fuel your passion with our gallery of pics and stories from the world's best photographers.

18 It works for me!

Readers share the images they've created after being inspired by *Digital Photo* projects.

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52 Why this shot works

Expert insight on the shooting skills and detail in making a great retro-themed portrait.

58 The big interview: Alicja Zmyslowska

The 21-year-old photographer reveals how her passion for pooches led to her turning pro.

90 Your pictures

Constructive critique of readers' images, with tips & suggestions for making them even better.

96 Nikon Special Photo answers

Discover how to set up a Nikon D3300 for HDR shooting, use Highlight Weighted metering, how DX lenses work on FX cameras, the difference between Slow and Rear flash, and much more!

103 Next month

A furtive glance at all the good stuff coming up in the action-packed Spring issue of Britain's favourite photography mag.



Camera Techniques

24 CORE Master composition in four easy steps

Learn how to use Digital Photo's brand new system that breaks down great framing into four simple steps: Content, Orientation, Rules and Enhancement.

34 Something for the weekend!

Combine your shooting and Photoshop skills to create a fun, action-hero image, featuring a self-portrait.

42 Get more from flash

Get to grips with studio flash and discover how to set up your camera and lights for pro-quality pictures.

48 Bucketlist locations

Discover one of the UK's best spots for stunning shots, at the inside-out Lloyds Building in London.

50 Shoot it now!

Make the most of April showers by using puddles for creative reflections. We reveal the best camera setup.

54 Out of the ordinary

We challenge you to turn a cuppa into a creative image!



Gear Focus

106 Gear news

Our roundup of all the latest photo news and announcements from the digital world.

108 Shoulder bags group test

A lightweight and compact shoulder bag is a must for smaller DSLR kits and shorter days out. We assess six of the top models under £50 and find out which is the best contender for your cash.

116 Fujifilm X-Pro 2

The latest retro-styled CSC from Fujifilm offers an APS-C format sensor with a 24Mp resolution and a new AF system. We assess its performance and value.

120 Gadgets & gizmos

The DxO One camera, Samsung's solid-state T1 external hard drive and Photobox's Pro Lay Flat photo book go under *Digital Photo* scrutiny.



Photoshop Skills

68 Fragment a portrait

Use your free brush kit in conjunction with Layers and Masks to create amazing dispersion effects.

72 Add a custom vignette

Guide your viewer's eye to the key focal points in an image by creating a bespoke vignette effect around the perimeter of the pic.

76 Photoshop Masterclass: Gradient Maps

Discover how Gradient Maps can be used creatively to enhance colour and control tonality in an image.

80 Make a textured portrait

Blend different images with your people pictures to give a creative, artistic finish.

82 Combine text with photos

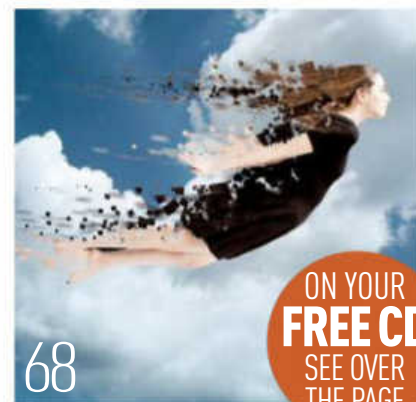
Add a message and blend it into a shot using the Type tool, the Liquify command and a selection of Photoshop Filters.

86 Make mono from RAW

Use Lightroom to convert a lacklustre RAW file into a beautiful black & white image, bursting with contrast and atmosphere.

130 Photoshop 60 second fix

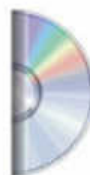
Transform a photo into a watercolour painting in less than a minute using our surprisingly quick and simple technique!



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THE PAGE

9

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**103
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OF EXPERT
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Please note: Accompanying video content is only available on the iPad and Kindle Fire HD versions of Digital Photo as sold via the Apple and Amazon App Stores / Newsstands, or alternatively it is available on the free CD accompanying each monthly print magazine. Video content is not currently available on or for the Digital Photo digital editions, as sold on these platforms: Google

Play Newsstand; Google Play Apps; Zinio; Readly; Kobo. Subsequently, please note that the 'Lite' digital versions on these platforms are discounted to take this into account. If you have any questions about any of our digital editions please email digitalsupport@bauermedia.co.uk and we will endeavour to answer as quickly as possible.

you need. After watching the videos, follow the mag's step-by-steps in your own software using the supplied start images.

You'll be surprised how easy it is to develop the skills that will improve every picture you take!

4 Use Gradient Maps

Discover Photoshop's versatile tool for editing colours and brightness.

7 Shoot an HDR sequence

Use a camera's Exposure Compensation mode to capture shots for HDR.

5 Apply a texture

Blend textures and patterns with a portrait for a creative finish.

8 Go mono from RAW

Control tones to produce a punchy black & white pic in Lightroom.

6 Personalise with text

Make a custom message with the Type tool and bend it into shape.

9 Create a painting

Turn a photo into a watercolour in just 60 seconds with Filters.

+ Also on your amazing interactive disc this month...



+ Start images

Use these files to practise the step-by-step projects with your own software.

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THE BIG PICTURE

Staircase of light



When visiting well-known locations, photographers have to stretch their creative skills to the limit to bring a fresh new angle to an often-viewed scene. For

Aaron Choi, salvation lay in his lens choice when he visited the famous double helix Bramante staircase inside the Vatican City museum in Italy. "The shot was taken with my fisheye lens to exaggerate the descending curve of the architecture," explains Aaron, who is based in South Korea but was visiting Italy while studying. For a secondary point of difference from the usual view of this scene, Aaron turned to Lightroom. "The original lights were a fluorescent orange, but I changed them to red via the Hue slider, as this darkened and intensified the atmosphere."

What was used

Camera Sony A6000 & 8mm fisheye lens

Exposure 1/5sec f/8, ISO 400 **Software** Lightroom

Visit www.aaronchoipho.com

+ GET THIS SHOT

There's often very little light inside locations like museums. This will result in slower shutter speeds so if you wish to avoid high ISO levels, the camera must be stabilised. Most museums don't allow tripods, so rest the camera on a railing or invest in a versatile Gorillapod.



With some clever processing, Aaron was able to bring a fresh twist to a famous view.

The background of soft pastel colours complements Miki's delicate subject.



MIKI ASAI

CREATIVE MACRO

Up close and incredible



In the world of macro fine-art, Japanese photographer **Miki Asai** has built an impressive

portfolio of shots that fuse close-up technique with breathtaking colours. For this image though, Miki had to really push her skills. "Dandelion seeds are very light and can be moved

by your breath alone. For this shot, I had to turn off the air-conditioning and hold my breath while I pressed the shutter button," she explains.

Miki set up her camera with the Live View mode activated and zoomed in to the screen's 10x magnification so she could focus with absolute precision on the dandelion seeds.

A small water dropper was used, rather than a spray bottle, to delicately place the droplet in exactly the right position on each seed.

What was used

Camera Canon EOS 600D & 60mm macro lens

Exposure 0.8sec @ f/8, ISO 200

Software Lightroom

Visit 500px.com/mikichobi

+ GET THIS SHOT

Miki's lighting set-up was simple. As the shot was taken at night, she used a desk lamp as the main light source and a small LED torch to provide some backlight. Any colour cast caused by the lamp can be corrected in processing.

The use of a drone captured a composition that could only otherwise be achieved by hiring a helicopter.



STORY BEHIND THE SHOT



“ We downloaded the shot with smiles across our faces! ”

Pro photography couple **Jean & Julia Wimmerlin** share the story behind one of their high-flying travel images...

Why did you capture this scene?

We planned our trip to Scotland based on the picture opportunities, and the Glenfinnan Viaduct was top of our list. The viaduct is famous for its beautiful horseshoe shape and for featuring in the *Harry Potter* films. We plan most of our trips according to the photographic opportunities.

How did you shoot this unique view?

On day one we arrived in Glenfinnan and scouted for the best spots to

shoot the viaduct. We then looked at the timetable to check when the steam train goes over the bridge, and decided to come back on the following day to, hopefully, get the perfect shot. We arrived with time to spare and launched our drone.

What problems did you encounter?

That morning, the train was late! The drone, which was positioned 77m above the ground, was dropping below 50% on the battery and some

drops of rain started to fall. Eventually, we heard the train whistle in the distance and it was not long before it majestically crossed the viaduct. We both took our shots from different angles and then rushed back to a dry place. We downloaded our pictures with a big smile across our faces – our mission had been accomplished!

What was used

Camera DJI Inspire 1 drone with X5R camera

Exposure 1/250sec @ f/7.1, ISO 200

Visit 500px.com/jwimmerli

+ GET THIS SHOT

Short of hiring a helicopter, drones are the best way to capture unique aerial views. Jean and Julia's drone is pricey, but there are more affordable options on the market. Entry-level models, like the Xiro Xplorer, start from £399 (www.wexphotographic.com).

Veit used styrofoam boards to control the shadows falling on his subject.

VEIT VAN HELDER

CREATIVE PORTRAITS

A world of light and shade

While other photographers plump for hyper-real composite portraits, **Veit Van Helder** sticks to a purist approach that yields simple yet beautiful results. The Dresden-based photographer shoots stunning people pictures that focus on light and shadow, and he uses these tones as vital elements in his work.

"This image was taken during a sunny day in the city. I made a series that focused on patterns and the images formed part of an exhibition," Veit explains. To create the patterns, He used styrofoam boards cut into shapes and then harnessed the power of the natural sunlight to make the shadow across his subject's face.

The mono conversion strips away any colour that could distract the viewer from the main focal point – the subject's eyes.

What was used

Camera Nikon D700 & 50mm lens

Exposure 1/500sec @ f/2.8, ISO 100

Software Photoshop

Visit 500px.com/vanhelder

+ GET THIS SHOT

Use a prime lens if you want to capture a very shallow depth-of-field in a portrait. A 50mm prime costs under £100 for a Canon model, and offers a large aperture of f/1.8. In Aperture priority mode, set the aperture to f/1.8, then focus on the eyes and shoot!

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With split-second timing, Ben captured this once-in-a-lifetime action image.



CREATIVE PORTRAITS

Motion of the ocean



Surf shooters are just like the athletes featured in their adrenaline-

saturated images and are always chasing that perfect swell.

Professional photographer

Ben Thouard captured this

amazing shot of Landon

McNamara surfing Teahupoo in

Tahiti. Ben lined up the unusual

composition by swimming below

the water line and shooting

with his DSLR protected in an

Aquatech housing. "A bunch of

surfers from around the world

came to Tahiti as a big swell

had been predicted. The waves

were about six feet and building

all the time," says Ben, who

explains the water in the ocean

was incredibly clear allowing him

to shoot lower in the water. Also

there was no wind so the surface

had a glassy effect. "I dived

underwater and shot a number

of images, but this was the

perfect frame where everything

came together. The shape of the

wave, the position of the surfer

and the light going through

the water creating a beautiful

atmosphere perfectly describe

the beauty of the sport."

What was used

Camera Canon 1D MkIV & 16mm lens

Exposure 1/500sec @ f/5.6, ISO 400

Software Photoshop

Visit www.benthouard.com

BEN THOUARD

+ GET THIS SHOT

If you want to shoot

underwater, a protective housing like Ben's is essential. There are affordable options out there that will protect your DSLR. Brands to look out for are Outtex and Ewa Marine (www.ewa-marine.com).

CREATIVE LANDSCAPES

Chasing the light



Colour and texture are two important variables in landscape photography and **Jure Kravanja** found an

abundance of both during a visit to Antelope Canyon in Arizona. "I got into photography relatively late in life and first started taking photographs and sharing them around 10 years ago," explains Jure, who is based in Slovenia. The semi-pro photographer was attracted to the scene by the variation of hues within such a small area.

"I was immediately drawn to the colourful patterns of the cave walls. If I allow my imagination to run free, I no longer see a 'lifeless' scene, but rather the waves of a sea beaming with dynamism and energy." In processing, Jure used Google's Viveza 2 software to increase the exposure and saturation levels in the image.

What was used

Camera Nikon D3 & 14-24mm lens

Exposures 1sec @ f/10, ISO 250 **Software** Viveza 2

Visit 500px.com/yurko

+ GET THIS SHOT

For richly-detailed

landscapes, use a wide-angle lens and set a low ISO value. In Aperture priority mode, dial in a small aperture of f/11-f/16. This will slow your shutter speed, so to avoid blur from camera shake, use a sturdy tripod to keep the detail in the shot pin sharp.



The contrast between light in Jure's image adds a sense of depth to this landscape.

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Glass apple

by John B Davies



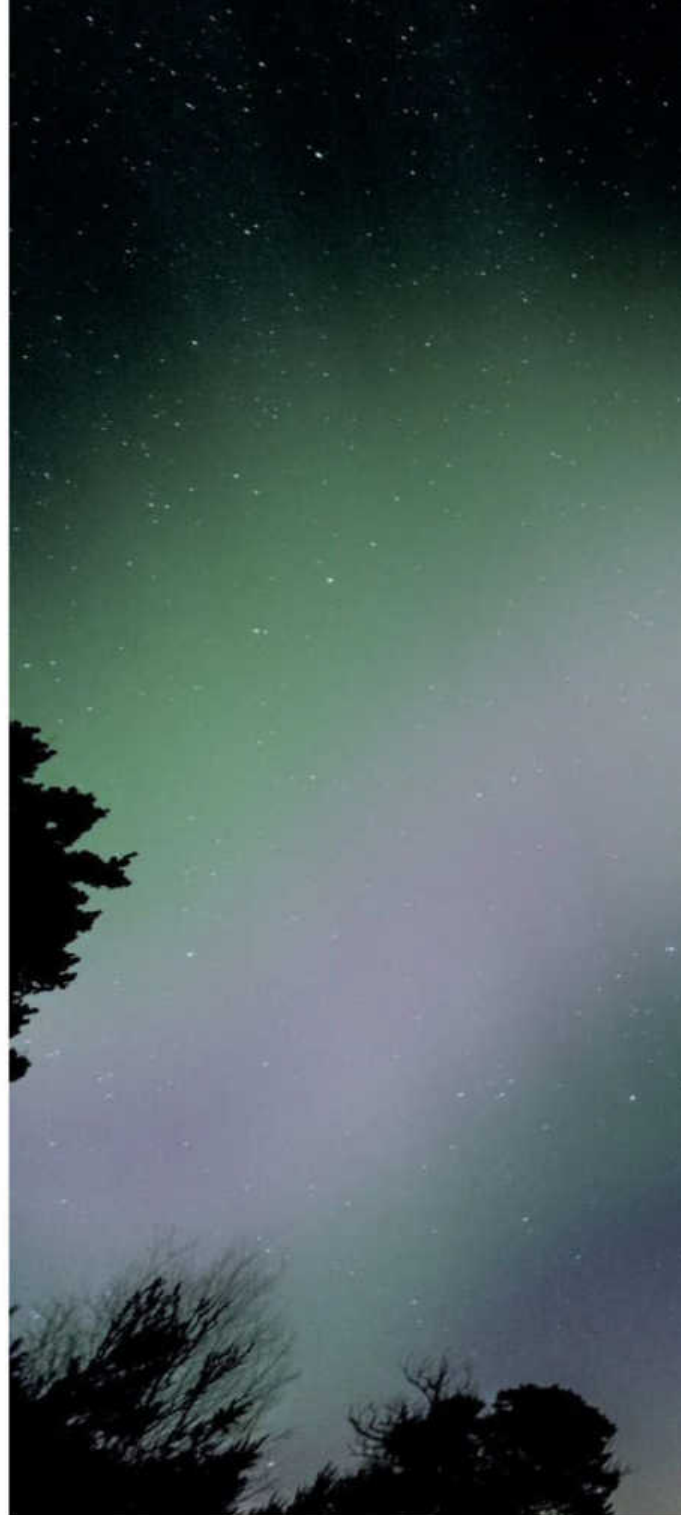
From Mayals, Swansea
Tell us about your image

Here's is my attempt at the 'Create an artistic Polaroid joiner' technique from the March 2016 issue. It has turned a simple glass paperweight into an arty, eye-catching image. I had taken the shot with my Sony A6000 before applying the edit in Photoshop CS6.

First, I arranged the 4x3 grid template supplied with the magazine over my image. Then I selected parts of the image one square at a time using the Magic Wand tool before pasting them into the

Polaroid frames template to create the joiner. Using the Free Transform tool, I adjusted the individual squares to give the image its interesting disjointed effect.

Original pic



Night glow

by Nick Lucas



From Ringwood, Hampshire

Tell us about your image When I saw this technique in the February 2016 of *Digital Photo*, it really appealed since we don't get

the aurora down in Dorset very often! The promise to 'Add your own aurora to any picture' seemed perfect for an image I had taken with my Canon EOS 7D MkII as part of a night-time star trail shoot using a 10-18mm lens.

Although I was pleased with my shot, it lacked a sense of atmosphere, and I thought a subtle aurora effect would look very convincing behind the silhouette of the old tree. I followed the video lesson to the letter to get the exact colours used in the magazine. I started by painting a pink arc in the sky on a new Layer, to which I then added some blur using the Gaussian and Motion Blur Filters in Photoshop.

I repeated this step again, but with a green line. I was then able to use Free Transform to alter the shape of the

Nick added the intriguing glow of the Aurora Borealis to his Dorset night shot in Photoshop.

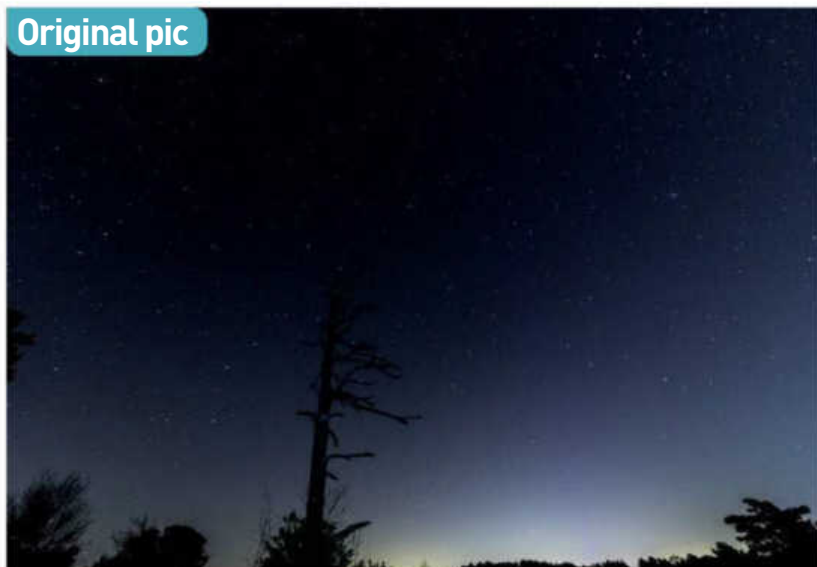


coloured stripes. This ensured they covered a suitable area of the sky without spilling onto my foreground interest.

Next I added a new Layer of pale green clouds via the Clouds Filter, before applying some Motion Blur and blending the Layers together using the Overlay Blending Mode. I also added natural waves to the aurora using the Warp tool. Because my image had trees reaching up into the sky, I made a Selection of them using the Magic Wand tool. I then punched the Selection into a separate Layer to sit over the top of the aurora effect. That's all it takes to see Northern Lights in the south of England!

“THIS TECHNIQUE REALLY APPEALED SINCE WE DON'T GET THE AURORA DOWN IN DORSET VERY OFTEN!”

Original pic





This street in Edinburgh has taken on a painterly look thanks to Photoshop's Filters and Brushes.

Old Town

by Jeremy Fairclough



From Kendal, Cumbria Tell us about your image

This is a result of the 'Transform photos into fine art - fast!' tutorial in the August 2015 issue. The original picture, taken with my Sony Alpha 35 and 18-70mm lens, is of a street in Edinburgh's Old Town, and captures the colours, light and shadows.

To get the watercolour effect, I made two copies of the first Layer containing my original image. On the top Layer, I created a sketch effect using the Glowing Edges option in Photoshop's Filter Gallery, and desaturated it to remove the colour. Then I used the Glass Filter from the Filter Gallery for some texture, and changed the Blending Mode to Multiply.

On the middle Layer, I again applied the Glass Filter before changing the Blending Mode to Darken. Finally, it was time to

create the painted finish using the Brush tool on a new inverted Layer. I resisted painting too close to the edges of the scene, leaving a pencil effect to make it appear as though the artist had drawn a sketch of the scene prior to painting.

Original pic



Reflecting on breakfast

by Belinda Ewart



From Uxbridge, Middlesex Tell us about your image

After seeing 'Cutting edge concepts' in the 'Out of the ordinary' challenge from the March 2016 issue, I set about arranging my own creative shot of a knife.

I originally set up the scene as a simple composition on the plate, but then I noticed the reflection of

the Marmite label in the knife blade and so reframed and refocused the shot to include that. There were lots of test shots, moving the butter and the knife until the image had the right balance, before I settled on the final one.

I took the shot with my Canon 70D and 100mm macro lens attached to a tripod. My son helped out by holding a reflector to throw extra light onto the scene.



Kinkaku

by Richard Williams



From Birmingham, West Midlands Tell us about your image

I made use of two *Digital Photo* projects for this image: 'Get Stylised HDRs with Photomatix' from the January 2016 issue helped me make short work of blending three initial images, and 'Artfully desaturate for pro-style results' in the February 2016 issue helped make the pavilion stand out.

I used my Nikon D80 with a 10-20mm lens. Tripods aren't allowed at Kinkaku in Kyoto, Japan, so I took three quick shots hand-held at f/16 using the auto-bracketing mode. The Photomatix plug-in supplied free with the magazine was just the thing I needed to blend the three shots together accurately.

I like the other-worldly look you get from an HDR image - it's a technique that can transform an ordinary shot and make it look

extraordinary. After tweaking the options in Photomatix, I liked the slightly desaturated look I'd settled on, but decided to boost the yellows to draw attention to the pavilion - it commands your attention at the scene, after all.

The trickiest part was tweaking the image for balance and appearance. I used the wide end of my 10-20mm lens, so I had to make alterations using the Perspective tool to counter the 'converging verticals' effect.

Original pic



Sparklers and a torch cast the light during a 30secs exposure for Finbarr's light-painted image.



Back in time by Finbarr Murray



From Mallow, County Cork, Republic of Ireland

Tell us about your image I've been busy buying up previous issues of the interactive version of *Digital Photo* on my iPad, and that's where I found the inspiration for this shot – way back in the February 2013 issue! The '10 top tips for painting with light' article gave me all the information I needed to turn a model Delorean car from the 'Back to the Future' film series into a striking action shot. I set up the shot in my office, with my Canon EOS 7D MkII and 17-55mm lens.

This image is the result of a 30secs exposure in pitch darkness. During this time I used sparklers to trace around the wheels and to create a trail behind the car, and then painted the car with the light from a small torch to bring out the detail. The car itself also had internal lights that I turned on.

I then took the image into Photoshop, where I added Radial Blur to the wheels to give the illusion of movement, and some Motion Blur in places to indicate speed. It was a trial-and-error process for getting the right amount of 'spark' and blur into the image, but the final result has a good balance of both.

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Richard merged three exposures in Photomatix, and desaturated the results in Photoshop to make the pavilion stand out.





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Frame up like a pro with *Digital Photo's* new system and ensure every shot you take is beautifully arranged. With CORE, the key aspects of composition are broken down into four easy-to-follow steps... **C**ontent. **O**rientation. **R**ules. **E**nhancement.

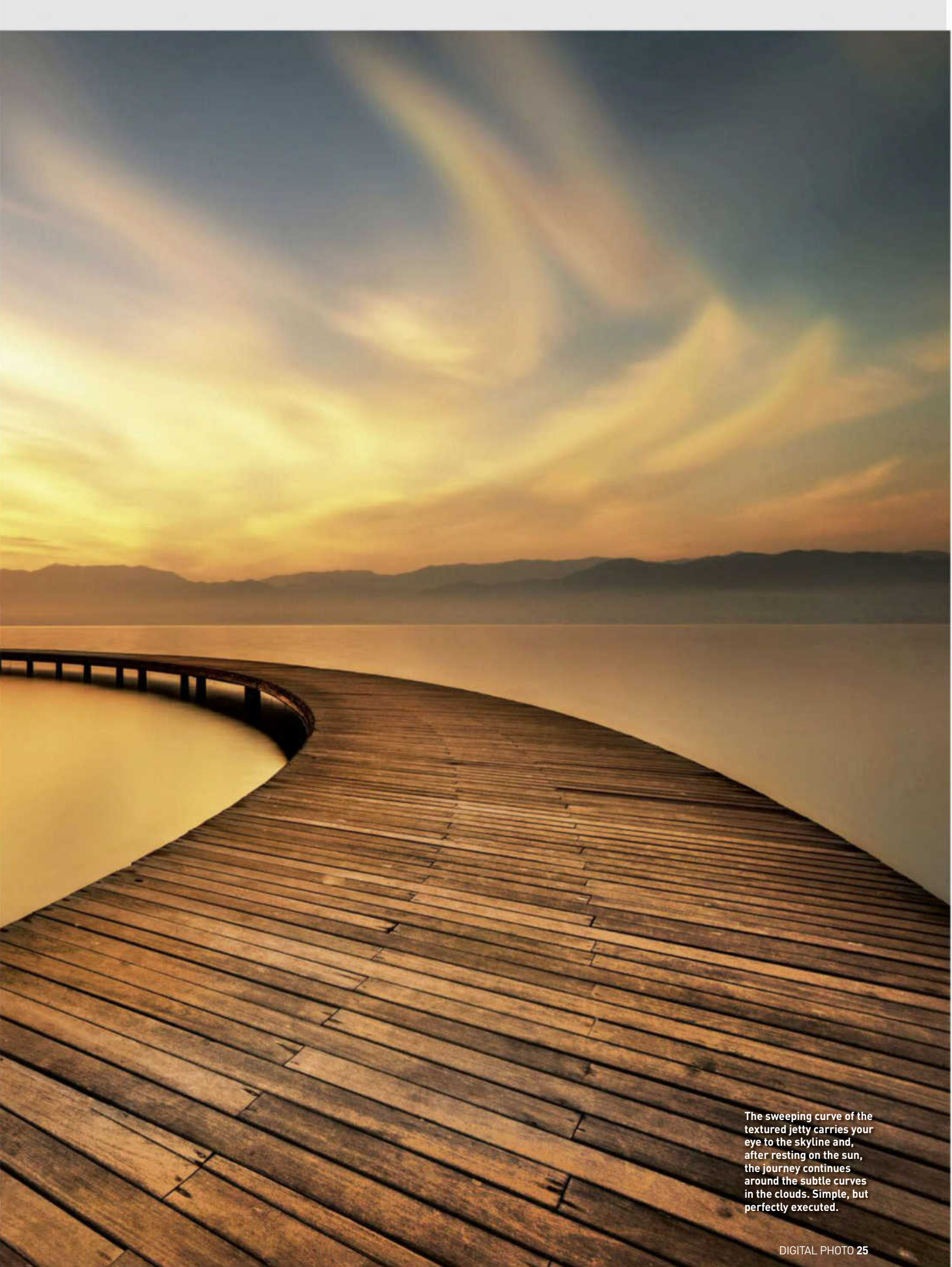
Give a newcomer a fully-featured DSLR and an expert a basic, fixed-lens compact. Send them both off to the same place to take a shot, and it'll be no surprise that the expert comes back with the best picture. With no control of photographic fundamentals like aperture, shutter speed or focal length, the expert will deliver the goods because they'll be using their knowledge of composition.

All other considerations fall by the wayside, because the art of framing is the biggest factor that separates a good picture from a duff one. It is


the primary photographic skill.

But how hard do you work at your composition? Modern cameras possess more technology and computing power than NASA used to stick a man on the moon, and it's all too easy to get side-tracked into technical areas that carry far less impact than a well-framed shot.

But what does 'well-framed' actually mean? Over the coming pages, we reveal a new way of approaching composition, and it's all neatly divided into four simple steps. Follow these, and your pictures are guaranteed to be better than ever. ▶



The sweeping curve of the textured jetty carries your eye to the skyline and, after resting on the sun, the journey continues around the subtle curves in the clouds. Simple, but perfectly executed.



Thinking about the content of your shot and what it 'says' will help define your composition.

C CONTENT

Every shot needs a subject, and filling the frame with it will lead to stronger, more confident pics

Content is the starting point for any shot. Every picture is *of* or *about* something, and whether this is a person, place, critter or still-life item, your chosen content needs to stand out. Your eye will pick out the subject of your shot from the view before you, and your task is to fill the frame with it. And nothing else.

All too often, composition is weakened because the subject doesn't dominate the pic. When you train your viewfinder on a scene, ask yourself *what is this shot about?* The

answer should be reflected in your content, and nothing else in the frame should be distracting your viewer from this.

But in the heat of the moment, when focusing your attention on your subject, it's easy to get 'tunnel vision' and ignore the surrounding areas. So before going near the shutter button, take a look at what's around it. If you have acres of empty space to the left and right, your subject will be lost in the frame. This means you need to tighten up your composition to ensure the subject is the

dominant element. When cropping in to lose 'dead' space, always move your feet whenever possible, as getting physically closer offers more options and usually yields better results and than simply zooming in. If you can't get closer – perhaps because of obstructions – that's the time to resort to your zoom.

Another way a subject can get lost is when it's set against a fussy, cluttered background. This will compete with your true content and weaken the shot. By changing angle – again by moving your feet – you'll often find a simpler

Why this shot works

A The subject in this image is unmissable. The squirrel dominates the frame and leaves the viewer in no doubt as to the key focus of the shot. The rest of the image provides context, and the defocused branches in the distance work as a natural frame to the subject.

B The low-angle composition and wide focal length work perfectly to not only stretch the perspective of the tree in the

foreground but, more importantly, to help the surrounding trees lean in. This guides the viewer's eye from any corner of the image towards the main focal point.

C Selecting a medium aperture of $f/6.3$ with a 15mm wide-angle lens keeps the subject pin sharp, but allows the more distant areas to fall into a blur. This ensures the background detail is contributing to the image, but doesn't distract the eye.



Getting subjects to stand out

Achieving a good sense of separation between your subject and a messy background is straightforward if you can change position to line up a cleaner backdrop. But this won't always be possible, and in situations where you want the context of a particular location, it won't even be desirable. To reduce the impact of the background without losing it altogether, you need to throw it out of focus. This isolates the subject and gives it an almost 3D appearance, creating bold shots, rich in content. And because the eye automatically picks out the sharpest element in the frame, isolating your subject in its own band of focus is a smart technique to master.

To do it, use Aperture priority mode (A or Av) and dial in the lowest f /number your lens will allow. Focus on the subject, and the background will be blurred. To exaggerate the effect, zoom in to a longer focal length.

$f/16$ aperture



$f/2.8$ aperture



Using a larger aperture (a smaller f /number) will blur the background and make a subject stand out.

backdrop that doesn't command attention and allows your subject to stand out.

The final content check is to remember that your pic consists of the *entire* frame – not just the part your subject occupies. Frame edges can be a breeding ground for all kinds of distractions, so glance around the periphery, and if you find anything that isn't contributing, get rid of it!

Dealing with picture content in this way will ensure you get confident shots that are big on impact.

DMITRY LAUDIN

MATTY GRAHAM / BAUER

Horizontal framing is more common for landscape scenes, but can be used to give more context to upright subjects.



OIENTATION

There's more than one way to hold a camera, and choosing the best format for your shot will lead to stronger compositions

With your picture's content decided on, the next step is to consider the best shape for your frame. Professional photographers sometimes have the format imposed on them, and know the shape of the frame before they start. If you're shooting a cover for a CD, for example, your shot needs to be in square format, and if you're shooting a magazine cover, then you'll need to compose with the camera held vertically. For enthusiasts though, the choice of the best orientation is generally informed by the way the subject

presents itself. You know you need to fill the frame with the subject, so if its shape is essentially vertical – like a portrait – then rotating the camera through 90 degrees will give the best opportunity to pack in the detail. If, on the other hand, the content is broader than it is tall – like many landscapes – then keeping the camera horizontal will be the best option to fill the viewfinder.

Neither of these concepts are remotely fixed, however, and you can shoot outstanding portraits by holding the camera horizontally, and equally stunning landscapes in the

vertical orientation. In fact, when it comes to including foreground interest in the scene (something we'll come onto over the page) it's often much easier to shoot upright landscapes.

What's important is to consider both orientations for the shots you take. One will often be stronger than the other, as a result of the way the content is arranged within the scene. Switching between horizontal and vertical framing is a great habit to adopt when you're out shooting, and if you use the correct method (see panel above right), you'll find it takes less than a second to do.

Switching orientation



To quickly change from horizontal to vertical shooting, first get your horizontal grip right.



Horizontal grip

With your right hand on the grip and finger on the shutter, use your left hand to support the weight while your fingers cradle the lens.



Vertical grip

To switch to vertical, leave your left hand exactly where it is, but move your right hand up and over the top. This is the most solid position for vertical shooting, and with a little practice, you'll find switching second nature.



Vertical framing fills the frame with upright subjects, making the shot about them rather than their environment.

ISTOCKPHOTO

Add a creative twist with a Dutch tilt

Whether you opt for landscape or portrait format when choosing your orientation, keeping the horizon absolutely level is a must for the majority of high quality pictures. But for compositions with a difference, try a 'Dutch tilt'. This is a style of shot that breaks the rules by running the horizon diagonally through the frame at a steep angle. It seldom works for scenic shots, but can add extra energy to portraits and a dynamic edge to architectural images.

The key to a successful Dutch tilt is to make sure the camera angle is truly steep (around 30-45 degrees) because if you only tilt by a few degrees it'll look like a composition mistake. When using it, think of the components in your scene as shapes, rather than people or buildings, and look to arrange these shapes in a balanced way. And if you're wondering – the 'Dutch' bit has nothing to do with the Netherlands. It's actually a corruption of 'Deutsche', as it was first used in German expressionist cinema in the 1920s.



A steep camera angle can add a creative edge and extra energy to shots.

ISTOCKPHOTO

RULES

Following the established rules for composition will always lead you to well-balanced pictures. Here are the most useful guides to remember

Imposing restrictions on the way you choose to present the world to your viewer may seem like an odd thing to do in an artistic pursuit like photography. But if you think of 'rules' as guidelines to success, or formats that are proven to work, then the idea becomes much easier to swallow.

Whether you're using musical notes, paint brushes or a camera, all forms of art have rules. By using them, you increase your chances of making good shots great, and great shots spectacular! The prime directive behind compositional rules is to achieve a sense of

harmony and balance in your frame. Once you've decided what your picture is about and chosen which way up you're going to present it, how you balance the components within the frame is what will make – or break – your image.

How you tackle this depends on the amount of control you have over your subject. With a table-top still-life, you can physically reposition the items to suit your viewfinder. Similarly, with a portrait, you can direct your model to move her head or turn his shoulders until you get the lines and shapes just as you

want them. But in areas where you have no control over the subject – like landscapes or architectural shots – the way you position the components is down to where you place and how you angle your camera.

When it comes to getting a better balanced frame, the important thing is to always move your feet first. Only use your zoom as a last resort. Physically repositioning the camera gives many more options than staying put and changing focal length, and by 'working' your subject in this way, you'll discover that great shots don't just happen – they're made!

+ Lead-in lines

Strong linear features transport the eye to a key component in the frame. Always make sure lead-in lines go somewhere though, and avoid ones that take your eye out of the frame.





MATTY GRAHAM

+ Foreground interest With landscapes, if there's no texture and detail at the bottom of your frame, you'll have a weak shot with no 'anchor' to attract the eye. Lowering the camera angle or moving to the left or right to seek out foreground interest will reward you with much stronger pics.



JON ADAMS / BAUER

+ Active & passive space Any subject with a 'face' or 'front' requires more space on the side it's looking or travelling towards. Unless the face is straight on to the camera (and hence symmetrical), allow more 'active' space (the room the subject is moving or looking into) than 'passive' space (the area it has left behind).



JON ADAMS / BAUER

+ Rule of thirds Although it was devised by the Ancient Greeks 2500 years ago, this rule still works today. To use it, divide your frame into a 'nought & crosses' grid. The powerpoints of composition are the four points where two of the lines intersect. Place your shot's key point of interest on one of these, and you'll get a balanced frame.



JON ADAMS

+ Symmetrical framing Powerful for architectural shots and direct, front-on portraits, symmetry gives a perfect balance. When using symmetrical framing, always look for strong converging lines leading into the centre. They draw your viewer into the frame, making a shot highly compelling and inescapable.



ENHANCEMENT

Composition is often seen as a shooting skill, but there are three key Photoshop techniques that will help make shots even better..

You may believe the route to successful composition is getting it right in camera, but very few professionals subscribe to this old-school ethic. There's a certain pride that comes from perfecting a shot in the viewfinder, and the foundation for this is based on handing over a piece of slide film with every aspect present and correct. Since no one has actually done this for well over a decade, there's no real reason you have to live by the rules it imposes!

Many see the concept of 'photography' as something that's defined by the length of a

shutter click when you're out with your camera. If this were ever true, it only covered a small morsel of picture-taking activity. The art of black & white film photography was as much about the darkroom as it was about capture, and sumptuous colour landscapes of old were created by using very specific film emulsions that boosted particular colours to exaggerate the appeal. Manipulation of some kind or another has been part of photography since it was invented, and provided you're not trying to distort truth in a nefarious way, using today's post-processing techniques to

strengthen your composition is something everyone should do.

So, if you've taken an image that shows promise but is let down by the framing, our three quick and simple enhancement techniques may be all you need to produce a winner. All work with both Elements and Photoshop, and although they take just a few seconds to do, they will make a dramatic difference to the quality of your image.

Inspect your images closely, and unless you take perfect shots, chances are one of these will make them even better.

Before



Crop images to discover better compositions

Sometimes, despite the best intentions, you end up with shots where your content is good, but the composition could be better. The **Crop tool**, found in both Photoshop and Elements, offers a second chance to perfect your framing.

Once the tool is selected, a bounding box will surround your picture. Drag the corners or sides of the box inwards to create a new frame inside your shot. By holding the cursor outside

the box, you can rotate the crop by dragging the mouse. To help you achieve a strong composition, various overlays, such as a Rule of Thirds grid, can be selected in the Tool Options bar. You can also set up specific crop ratios or crop sizes here.

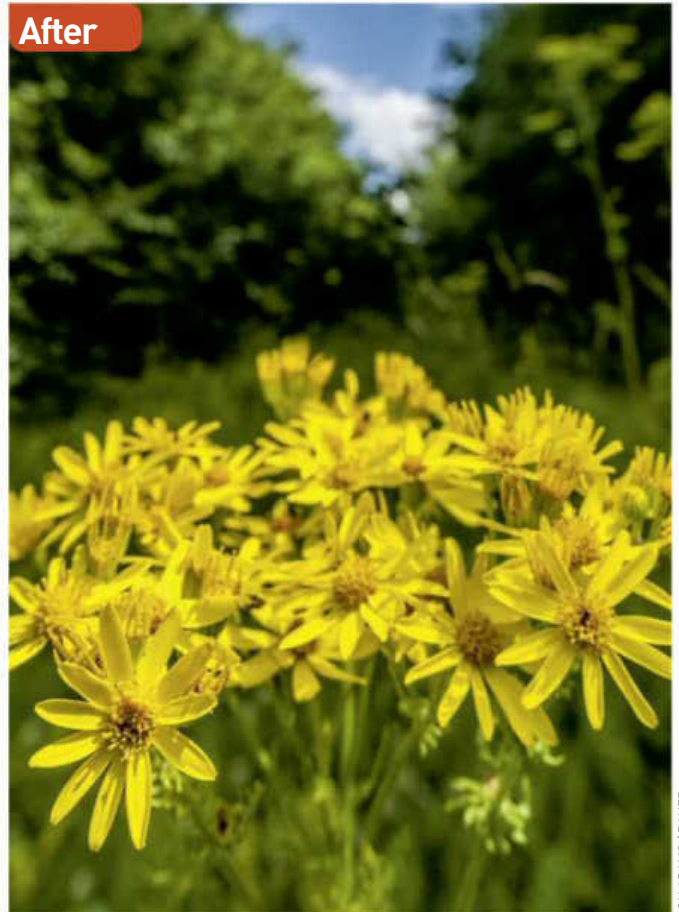
Once you've settled on your crop, hit **Return** or double-click inside the bounding box to reformat the image to the new frame.

After



MATTY GRAHAM / BAUER

After

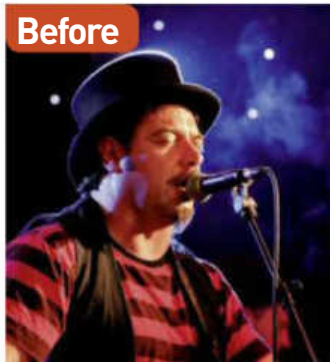


JON ADAMS / BAUER

Clone out distractions to increase impact

While the **Clone Stamp tool** may not immediately be thought of as a feature that can enhance composition, its ability to remove distractions will keep your viewer's attention on the subject. Found in the Toolbox, the Clone Stamp tool works by 'borrowing' pixels from elsewhere and painting them over the distractions. To use it, select the tool and then make its size a little larger than the area you want to repair using the square brackets keys. Now hold **Alt** and click on a part of the image you want to use to patch over the problem. With the area sampled, release **Alt** and then paint over the distraction. A little practice will have you producing seamless results in no time.

Before



Transform your shots into better shape

The **Transform** command is primarily used to change the size and shape of Layers in a Photoshop file, but you can use it as a highly creative composition tool, too. First copy your image as a new Layer with **Ctrl+J**, and then hit **Ctrl+T** to enter **Free Transform** mode. You'll can pull the handles around the box to enlarge your pic in the frame, and if you hold the **Ctrl** key while pulling the corner handles, you can distort the image to adjust how it fills the frame. This allows you to stretch and enlarge foregrounds, effectively recomposing the scene as though a different lens or camera angle had been used to take the shot.

Before



GO ON A WILD RIDE!

Undertake a seemingly impossible mission using a combination of camera and editing know-how

WORDS & PICS BY ANDY HEATHER

Fantastic images can be achieved in camera and in Photoshop, but the most satisfying projects are those that combine a healthy serving of both. In this tutorial, we'll show you how to shoot yourself or a family member from the right angle, and then use Photoshop to make it look like they're clinging to the wing of a jet like a true Hollywood action hero! This kind of fun-filled image makes for a great Facebook profile picture and is sure to get your friends and family talking.

To create this shot you'll first be flexing your shooting muscles using a tripod and a DSLR or compact system camera. The good news is the image can be taken in your living room, and it doesn't require any special lighting kit.

Once you've pressed the shutter button, you'll have your action-hero selfie, but it needs to be transported into a new scene. We'll show you how to use Photoshop or Elements to cut out the figure, tweak the colours to match the new background and blur the edges for a sense of speed. With these refinements made, your self-portrait will blend seamlessly into the scene.

This tutorial covers the entire photography process, so you're certain to come away with a few new tricks up your sleeve. The techniques you learn can be applied to a variety of shots in the future, and by seeing the project through from start to finish, you'll learn to take full creative control of your shooting and imaging.



Required kit

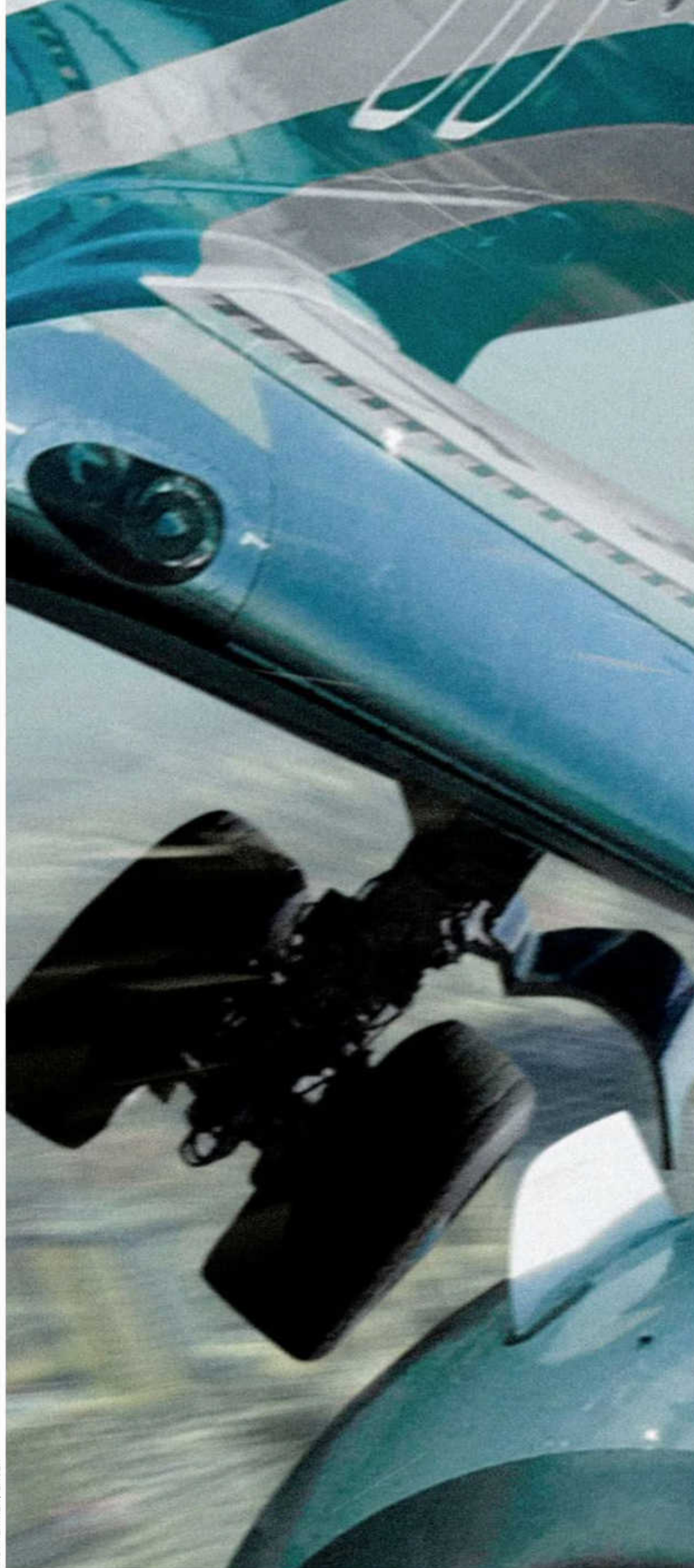
DSLR or CSC

Shooting with either of these means there won't be a quality mismatch between elements.



Tripod

This will help you to get the angle right and support your camera while you pose for the shot.



ANDY HEATHER / BAUER



The result is an exciting image that'll stun your friends and family, and creating it will develop new Photoshop skills.

TECHNIQUE
STEP-BY-STEP
GUIDE OVER
THE PAGE

SOMETHING FOR THE WEEKEND

SET UP AND SHOOT YOUR SUPER SPY

This tutorial involves a self-portrait, so it'll make your life easier if you attach your camera to a tripod and establish the angle first. You'll need to shoot almost head-on and your camera should be slightly elevated, so you're looking down on yourself. It'll help to have something comfortable to lie on, like a couple of sofa cushions. Because the background image was taken outside, you'll need plenty of light to make the shots match. If you're in your living room, open the curtains and let in as much light as you can.

It'll help to sell the illusion if you place a desk lamp in front of your face to create the impression that the light is reflecting off the wing under your chin. You'll also need a camera that has a Self-timer so you can press the shutter and get into position before it fires.

Light source

Shooting near a window will help you match the light between the shots. Put a lamp in front of your face to simulate light reflecting off the wing of the plane.

Camera and lens

A DSLR or CSC is ideal, but any camera that allows you to set your own aperture will let you get the depth-of-field right. You'll also need the Self-timer to take the shot while you pose.

Comfortable surface

Put some sofa cushions on the floor. You'll have 10secs to get into position and may have to retake your shot multiple times before it's right, so make sure your 'set' is as comfy as possible.

Tripod

A sturdy tripod is essential for locking your camera at the right height and angle to make sure all the elements match. It's also vital because you'll need to set the Self-timer and then quickly get yourself into position.



1 Attach your camera to a tripod

You're playing the role of the heroic lead yourself, so you'll need to fix your camera in position while you strike your pose. Extend two leg sections of your tripod so it's a few feet off the ground, but not all the way up to head height. If you're using a kit lens, set your focal length to 35mm so it matches the plane picture. You'll want to shoot yourself from the front, facing a little towards camera-left. You can see the top of the wing in the background image, and that means you'll need to shoot yourself from above with your back and legs partially visible. It may take a few test shots before you get the angle just right, so don't worry if it doesn't look perfect just yet.



2 Dial in the camera settings

Set your camera to Aperture priority mode, which is A or Av on the mode dial. In the background image you'll notice the depth-of-field is large, making the entire plane wing sharp. That means your secret agent will have to be sharp too. Dial in an aperture of f/11 to get a large depth-of-field that will keep you sharply focused from your fingertips to your boots. Activate your camera's Self-timer mode and set it to a delay of 10secs. This will give you time to get in position. The Self-timer will be set with a button, a dial or a menu option depending on the make and model of your camera. At this stage, leave your camera's focusing system on autofocus (AF). We'll be switching to Manual Focus (MF) later, but at this stage, AF is fine.

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SOMETHING FOR THE WEEKEND

3 Arrange your props & frame up

Place something soft on the floor to lie on, such as some sofa cushions or a camping mat. Position a bright desk lamp in front of them. Frame up on the cushions so they fit comfortably in the frame, leaving space for your arms and legs. If there's not enough space in the frame, move the camera backwards rather than zooming to change the focal length. Getting too close will cause perspective distortion, making it less likely that your secret agent will match the background image.



4 Put on your costume and focus

For an American-style agent, throw on a leather jacket and some jeans. For a suave British spy, a dinner jacket and bow tie usually works well! Whichever you choose, gel your hair up so it looks like the wind is blowing it back, or place a fan in front of you to create the effect for real. When you look the part, it's time to focus. Your camera's still set to AF, so activate a focus point that's on or close to the front edge of the cushion. Half-press the shutter button to focus, then switch your camera to Manual Focus so the autofocus won't kick in when you press the shutter button again to take the shot. The small aperture will give you a large zone of sharp focus, so your shot will be sharp from front to back.

5 Pose and shoot

Now it's time for your starring role. Press the shutter and quickly get into position. Lower yourself onto the cushions and raise your hands as if you're hanging on for dear life. Lift your legs up so they appear to be flying out behind you. Raise your head so it's clearly visible in the shot and half-close your eyes so it looks like the wind is hitting them at high speed. After the shutter fires, check the shot on screen and compare the angle of the figure to the angle of the plane in the mag. Also, make sure your arms and legs are inside the frame. If you want the face to be brighter, move the lamp closer. Keep shooting until you have a shot with both the right fun factor and the right angle.

TECHTALK

Perspective Distortion

Contrary to popular belief, a short focal length like 18mm won't necessarily distort your model's features – it's actually the lens-to-subject distance that causes it. Shooting at a wide focal length means you have to get close to fill the frame, and the proximity will cause their face to look stretched and make their nose look bigger.

Depth-of-field

Depth-of-field is a term used to describe the zone of sharp focus. A shallow depth-of-field means a small zone of sharp focus and is achieved by using a large aperture such as $f/2.8$. The opposite – a big depth-of-field – creates a large zone of sharpness. This is created by using an aperture value of $f/11$ or smaller.

Manual Focus

With most DSLRs, activating Manual Focus is done via a switch on the side of the lens. However, depending on make and model, it may be done with a button or menu option. Manual Focus is a great way to lock your focus in its current position so you can continue to shoot without changing the point of focus in the scene.

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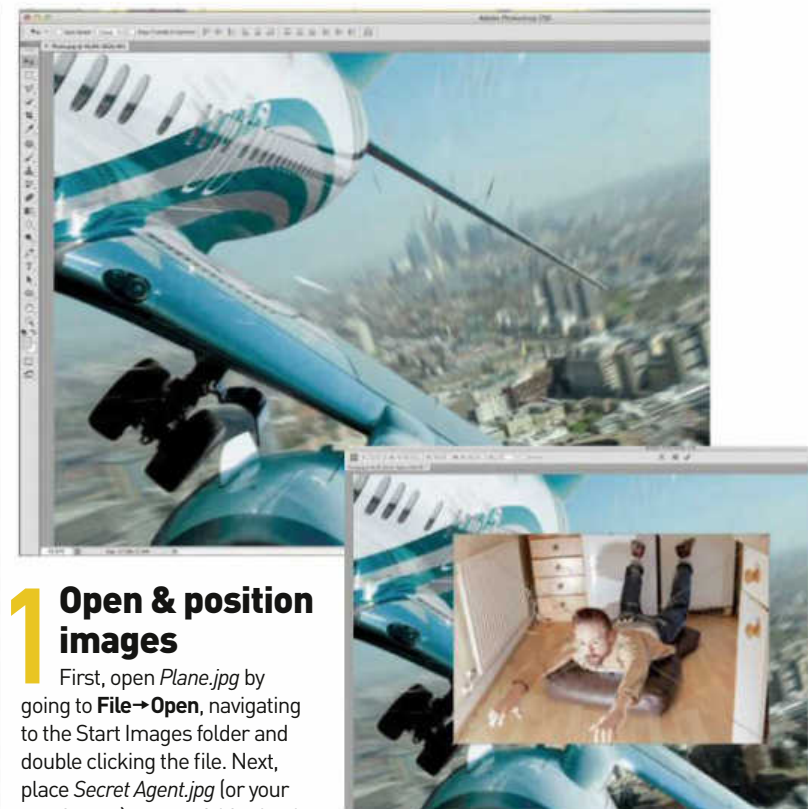
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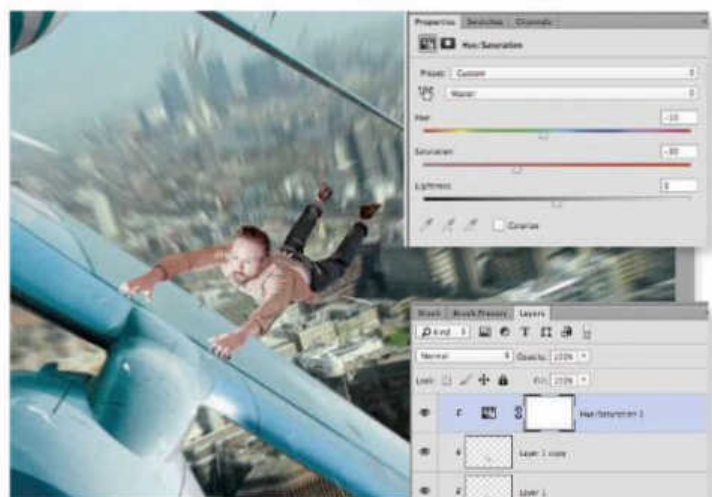
ON A WING AND A LAYER IN ELEMENTS OR PHOTOSHOP

Blend your daring protagonist with the background to create a fun composite pic that'll be the envy of your friends! It's easy to do in Photoshop or Elements - just follow the step-by-step...



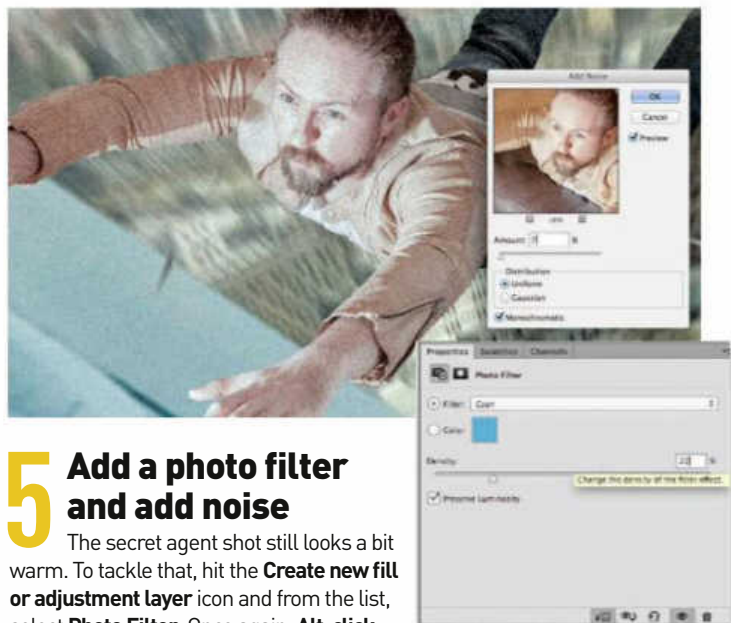
1 Open & position images

First, open *Plane.jpg* by going to **File→Open**, navigating to the Start Images folder and double clicking the file. Next, place *Secret Agent.jpg* (or your own image) on top of this shot by going to **File→Place** and double clicking the file. The shot will appear with Transform Handles on each side. Hold down the **Shift** key and drag those handles to make it a little bigger than is natural so you can easily make a selection around it. You'll resize it back to a natural size later, but for now it's vital that it's easily visible. Hit **Enter** to accept the changes.



4 Adjust Hue/Saturation

The colours of the protagonist in *Secret Agent.jpg* are a bit more saturated than the background, so we'll need to pull them down a little. To do this, click on the **Create new fill or adjustment layer** icon. It's at the bottom of the **Layers Panel** in Photoshop and the top in Elements and it looks like a half-black, half-white circle. From the dropdown menu, select **Hue/Saturation**. **Alt-click** on the line between this new Layer and the one beneath it in the Layers Panel to clip this new Layer to the secret agent image. In the Adjustment Layer dialogue box, drag the **Hue** slider to **-10** and the **Saturation** to **-30**. This will give the colours a more filmic look, helping them blend.



5 Add a photo filter and add noise

The secret agent shot still looks a bit warm. To tackle that, hit the **Create new fill or adjustment layer** icon and from the list, select **Photo Filter**. Once again, **Alt-click** on the line between this new Layer and the one beneath it in the Layers Panel to clip this new Layer to the secret agent image. Open the **Filter** dropdown menu by clicking on the little arrow next to where it says Warming Filter (85). From the menu select **Cyan** and reduce the **Density** to **22%**. The colour balance looks better now, but the figure is still too noise-free compared to the celluloid-style background image. Click on that Layer in the Layers panel then go to **Filter→Noise→Add Noise**. Make sure the **Distribution** is set to **Uniform** and that **Monochromatic** is **ticked**. Set the **Amount** slider to **7%**.



2 Select and cut out the figure

Activate the **Polygonal Lasso tool (L)** and click around the figure to make a Selection. Keep your line segments short between each mouse click so the Selection doesn't become too angular. Once you have a rough Selection, you can add to it by holding down the **Shift** key and making new line segments. If you want to remove anything, hold down the **Alt** key and click around it. When your Selection is complete, hit the **Refine Edge** button in the Tool Options bar. In Photoshop it's at the top of the screen, in Elements it's at the bottom. With the **Refine Radius** tool selected, brush over the hair and Photoshop will intelligently separate the hair from the background. Next to **Output To** select **Layer Mask**, then click **OK** to hide the unselected area. Now hit **Ctrl+T** to activate **Free Transform** and drag the handles to resize the cutout to a scale that matches the plane. Hover your mouse outside the bounding box and drag to rotate the figure so he appears to be holding on to the gap in the wing.



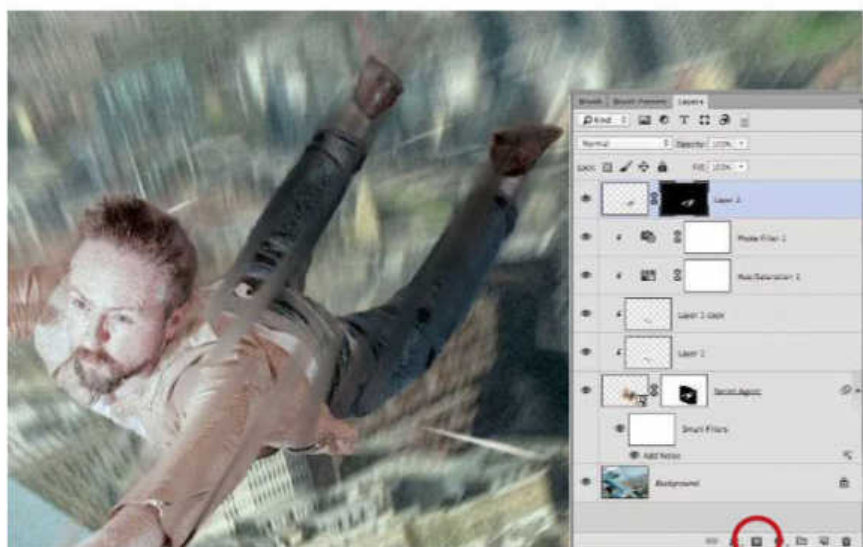
3 Get the fingers looking right

With the Layer Mask still active, select the **Brush tool** and make black your foreground colour. Set the **Brush Hardness** to **90%** and with a small brush, paint over the fingertips to hide them, making it look like they're going into the gap in the wing. A shadow will add to the illusion, so click on the **Create a new layer** icon and then **Alt-click** on the line between the new Layer and the one beneath it in the Layers Panel. A downward-pointing arrow shows that the new Layer is clipped to the one beneath it. Set your brush **Hardness** to **20%** and paint a black line along the fingers where you want the shadow. Set the Layer's Blending Mode to **Overlay**. **Duplicate** the Layer (**Ctrl+J**) and again **Alt-click** on the line between this Layer and the one below. Set the new Layer's Blending Mode to **Multiply** and reduce its **Opacity** to **20%**.



6 Merge to new Layer & add motion blur

The particles in the air are blurred, but the agent isn't, making him look too motionless. Add some dynamism to the shot by applying some Motion Blur. First, turn off the visibility of the background image by clicking on the 'eye' icon next to the bottom Layer. Next, select the top Layer in the stack and hit **Shift+Ctrl+Alt+E** to merge all the visible Layers to a new Layer. This will appear at the top of the stack. You can now turn the visibility of the background image back on. Go to **Filter→Blur→Motion Blur** and set the **Angle** to **60%** and the **Distance** of **150px**. The image is now so blurred that you can't see the hero's face, so we'll fix that in the next step.



7 Create a Mask and brush in Motion Blur

Click on the **Add layer mask** icon (it looks like a white circle in a dark rectangle) to create a Layer Mask on the blurred Layer. Hit **Ctrl+I** on your keyboard to invert the colours of the Mask, changing it from white to black. The blurred Layer is now hidden. Select the **Brush tool** and with a soft, white brush, paint lines around the edge of the agent to blur the edges a little. Keep your lines straight by clicking once at the start point of the line, holding down the **Shift** key, then clicking once at the end point. Don't paint over the face. When you're happy with the Motion Blur effect, save your image under a new name by going to **File→Save As**. If you plan to continue to edit your image in the future, use the **Photoshop Document (PSD)** format, which will keep all your Layers intact. If you've completed your pic and want to share or print it, use the **JPEG (JPG)** format, which will merge all the Layers and compress your file.

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LIGHTING
EFFECTS**

STUDIO FLASH

Invest in a studio lighting kit and take your camera skills to a higher plane!

TECHNIQUE & PICS BY BEN DAVIS

You don't need to be a lighting expert to shoot with a studio flash kit and create professional looking results. The truth is they're incredibly easy to operate, and are much more affordable than you might think. Full lighting kits that include everything you need for a home studio setup cost around £300. That's less than a top-of-the-range flashgun! Not only are they reasonably priced, but these kits include two flash heads, so you can have twice the fun!

Why should you use studio flash?

If you're keen on getting more creative with your portraiture, having extra control over indoor lighting or simply advancing your skills to a pro level, then a studio flash kit is certainly a worthwhile investment.

There are numerous benefits of using a home studio kit over a flashgun. For starters, the lighting heads themselves are much more powerful than a flashgun, and this in itself will expand your creative potential. As they're mains powered, the recycle times tend to be quicker, so there are fewer pauses while you're shooting, and no battery replacement expenditure either.

Studio lighting kits create softer light than a flashgun, too. Larger light sources have a wider spread of light – especially when used

with the supplied light modifiers – and create a much softer effect. This means you'll produce images with smoother shadows for more flattering results. Most studio flash heads also include a modelling lamp. This allows you to see the effect of your lighting before you take the shot. Experimenting with the setup is great fun too. Adjusting the position and angle of your lights will have a dramatic impact on the mood of an image. It's both quick and easy to produce a host of different effects, and you'll push your lighting creativity to new heights.

How does it work?

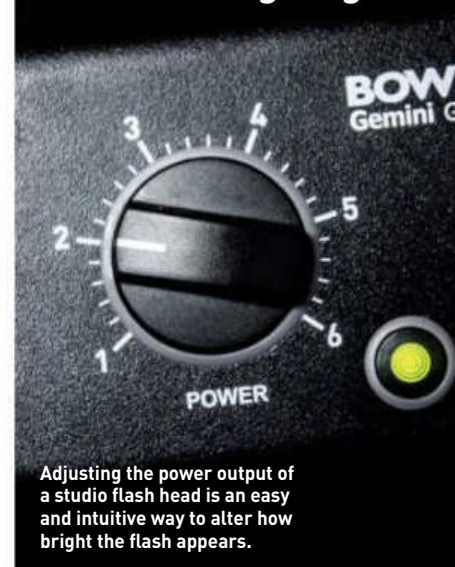
Setting up your studio lighting kit is as simple as plug-in and play. There's no complex manual to digest or new settings to work out – within

**“IT'S QUICK AND EASY
TO PRODUCE A HOST OF
DIFFERENT EFFECTS AND
PUSH YOUR CREATIVITY”**

minutes of opening the box you can be shooting with professional-style lighting.

Almost all lighting kits will include a way to trigger the flash heads wirelessly. Most have in-built radio receivers, and a supplied commander unit attaches to your camera's hotshoe so the lights fire when you press your shutter button. Older or more basic budget kits might lack this feature, so you'd need to use a PC sync cable which connects your camera to the flash head directly. If your camera doesn't have a PC sync port, an adapter which slots on your hotshoe to provide one can be picked up for a few pounds online. It's much better to work wirelessly though, as there are no trailing cables to worry about, so look for kits that include a radio trigger system in the box.

Taking control of your studio flash lighting



Adjusting the power output of a studio flash head is an easy and intuitive way to alter how bright the flash appears.

Adjusting the brightness of your studio lights is easy. To control the power output you'll find either a dial on the side or buttons on the back, and it's as intuitive as setting the volume on a Hi-Fi. Simply turn these up or down to make changes to the brightness. Another way you can alter the light level is to change the distance between your lights and your subject. Moving them closer will give brighter results, and also increase the hardness of the shadows. Positioning the lights a bit further away will lower the light level, and the wider spread of light will give softer results. Your camera settings will also control the brightness of the studio lights in your exposure. Increasing your ISO setting will make your camera more sensitive to light, so this is one quick way to get a brighter exposure. Alternatively the aperture governs how much light enters the camera, so use a lower f/number for brighter pics, or a higher f/number to make it darker.

Working with studio flash gives you much more power and control to expand your creativity.





With studio flash

DO I NEED A FLASHMETER TO MEASURE THE LIGHT?

A flashmeter is a special kind of light meter that measures the brief burst emanating from a flashgun. To use one, you attach it to the flash head via a sync cable and then dial in the ISO setting you want. By holding the flashmeter in front of your subject and pointing its sensor back towards the camera, you then push its 'test' button to fire the flash. Its sensor measures the light falling on the subject, and the display gives you the aperture setting you require for a good exposure.

Although indispensable when using film, you can avoid using a flashmeter with a DSLR, thanks to the screen on the back. Many photographers still love to use them, but for simple lighting setups, using a flashmeter to measure test flashes takes exactly the same time as shooting test pics with your camera. And when you consider that high quality flashmeters can cost as much as an entire two-head studio kit, it makes the investment in studio lights much easier to swallow!



What's included in a studio lighting kit



Trigger or sync cable
This is how you fire the flash heads. A wireless trigger is the preferable option as it frees up your mobility while shooting.



Light stand

You'll get one for each flash head, so most kits include two. Three legs splay out and lock into position, and better models include air cushioning so if you loosen a leg lock the stand won't hurriedly collapse and break the bulb.



Light modifiers

For more flattering results you need to soften the light. Kits include softboxes and/or umbrellas that attach to the flash heads and diffuse the light.

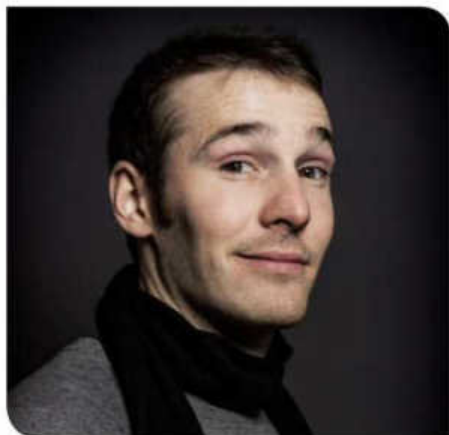
Flash head

This is the key part of any studio lighting kit. They have a built-in socket to clamp onto a light stand and adjust the angle of the head. Most models have built-in wireless receivers to fire the flash.



How to create flattering results with light modifiers

All studio lighting kits will come with light modifiers that attach to the flash heads. The most common modifiers are softboxes and umbrellas. A softbox produces very even and diffused light as the flash fires through a white screen, and gives square catchlights in a subject's eyes. An umbrella attachment does a similar job to a softbox in diffusing the light, but instead scatters the light in all directions, so can be more difficult to control. But either modifier is an ideal place to start if you want to create flattering light for your subject.



Using a softbox or umbrella to diffuse the light will give top quality results for your portraits.

Portraits are generally considered more pleasing when the light is soft, meaning there are no hard-edged shadows falling on your subject. As soft light has been diffused, its wider spread also helps reduce the appearance of wrinkles or blemishes on the skin, too.

Once you've mastered soft-light portraits with your modifiers, you can add other attachments to create a wide array of different

“AS SOFT LIGHT IS DIFFUSED IT HELPS TO REDUCE WRINKLES AND BLEMISHES ON THE SKIN”

effects. A beauty dish is commonly used in fashion photography, as the light is a little harder and produces gentle shadows below the cheeks to emphasise bone structure. A honeycomb grid creates an even harder, focused beam of light with no spill, which is ideal for adding a rim light. Coloured gels can also be introduced and are a brilliant way of altering the mood of a shot. All these accessories can be picked up online from third party vendors relatively cheaply. Just make sure that the Bayonet mount matches your flash head – usually they're either S-fit or EX fit.



Hard light vs Soft light

While soft and diffused light is generally considered the most appropriate for portraiture, hard light can still be used to good effect. It tends to suit male subjects more than female models, and creates a grittier and moodier finish to an image. As it hasn't been diffused by anything, hard light produces strong-edged shadows with more contrast, which adds drama to a shot. It's not very flattering to the skin, and will emphasise bumps and wrinkles by adding defining shadows. To create hard light, simply don't put your softbox or umbrella attachment on your flash head. To control the direction of the light more, invest in a grid, snoot or barn doors attachment.

Arranging your lights for different effects



Main & Rim

Attach the modifiers and place one flash head in front at a 45° angle to your model, and the other behind for a rim effect on the hair to create depth.

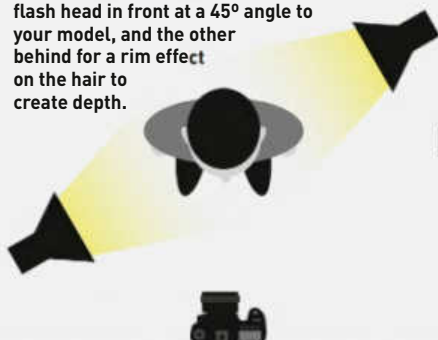


Figure of Eight

Set up the two modified lights so they are facing each other, and position your subject in-between. Great for more moody and interesting shots.



High-Key

Place both lights in front of your subject at adjacent 45° angles, so they are lit evenly from both sides to create bright images free of shadows.





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Creative lighting using studio flash

It's easy to get professional-looking results when shooting with a studio flash kit – follow these steps to pep up your indoor portraits!



1 Set your camera's exposure manually

Switch your camera's exposure mode dial to Manual (M) to take full control of the settings. Begin by setting the shutter speed to 1/200sec – this will ensure you're below the flash sync speed, and also limit the impact of any ambient light in the room, so your flash head is the only light source for your exposure. Set the ISO to 100 for maximum image quality, and dial in an aperture of f/11 for a reasonably deep zone of sharp focus. Attach your wireless transmitter to your camera's hotshoe or PC sync cable to your camera's port so you can trigger your studio flash heads when you press the shutter. Set your focus to its Single setting – this AF-S on a Nikon cameras and One Shot on Canon models.



2 Position your lights and set the power

Attach your preferred modifiers to the flash heads and place them in the positions you want for the mood of the shot. Turn them on and set them to 1/4 power, then take a test shot and check the exposure by looking at the image on the camera's LCD screen. Adjust the brightness of the flash heads up or down as required, and take another test shot. Repeat this process until you've finely tuned the light levels in your image. It doesn't take long, and setting up a pair of lights soon becomes very intuitive.



3 Take the shot

Now that you're happy with your exposure, focus on your subject's nearest eye by hovering the active AF point over the pupil and half-pressing the shutter button. Keep your finger half-pressed, recompose, and then fully depress the shutter to take the shot. Most flash heads take around 1sec to recycle, so set your camera's Drive mode to its Single shot option, so you don't end up with lots of blacked out frames where the flash hasn't fired. If you want to make your image darker, there's no need to adjust the lights – you can simply select a higher f/number like f/16. To make your shots brighter, all you need to do is dial in a lower f/number like f/8 to open the aperture and let in more light. This makes it quick and easy to adjust the balance as you shoot.



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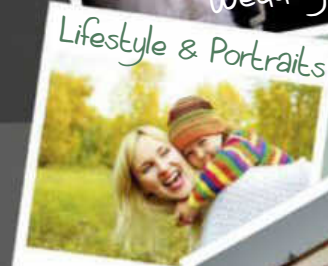
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WORDS & PIC BY MATTY GRAHAM

LLOYDS BUILDING LONDON



Why it's a gem

This architectural showpiece is called the 'Inside-Out' building, thanks to the tubular steelwork on its exterior. Standing at 88 metres high, this central London business hub is one of the tallest buildings in the area, so you can capture uncluttered images by shooting upwards and framing against a moody sky.



How to get there

Based in the heart of London's City district and a stone's throw from the Bank of England, the nearest Underground stops are the interlinked Bank and Monument stations. The Lloyds Building is a 5-minute walk from either of these. From Bank station, head east down Cornhill and then continue onto Leadenhall Street. You'll see it before you arrive!



When to shoot

The Lloyds Building offers photographers the best of both worlds. By day the glass and steel will reflect the sky, and at night, well-placed floodlighting offers dynamic images. Get there before it's fully dark for the latter though, to get some colour in the sky.



Local Knowledge

You'll be okay to take a tripod along. It's a popular location, and there are often other shooters present so you're unlikely to be alone. With the camera on a tripod and a wide-angle lens fitted to capture the building's vast scale, select a small aperture of f/22. This will give you a slower shutter speed to blur any movement in the clouds. A 3-stop ND filter is a good idea too, as this will exaggerate any motion captured.

MATTY GRAHAM



“BY DAY THE GLASS AND
STEEL REFLECT THE SKY,
AND AT NIGHT FLOODLIGHTS
OFFER DYNAMIC IMAGES”



With the floating leaves on the water's surface and surrounding ground falling into a blur, a reflection shot has a real sense of depth that will make your viewer look again.

SURREAL REFLECTIONS

TECHNIQUE & PIC BY MATT HIGGS

Well loved in landscape photography for the pleasing symmetry they can produce in lakes and rivers, reflections are one of nature's most eye-catching special effects. Even the humble street puddles that appear following a spring shower can be the basis for a stunning image, thanks to the reflections they reveal. Laying on the ground like some kind of portal to another dimension, they mirror small sections of the world around them. This can place subjects where they're least expected in a scene,

and create a unique and dramatic sense of depth.

By entirely filling the frame with one of these reflections, leaving only some of the puddle's edges to give context, it's surprisingly easy to capture strikingly abstract results. With ripples on the water's surface adding distortion, subjects that would once have appeared dull in a non-reflected shot now take on an ethereal aesthetic that's guaranteed to intrigue and enthrall viewers.

Here's how to set up your camera to shoot some of your own surreal masterpieces...



How to create an abstract reflection image



1 Pick a subject and angle

The best reflection photos usually have a clear subject and don't just feature a mirrored sky alone. Good subjects to include are people, trees or anything else that might intrigue a viewer. Once you've discovered a puddle with potential, finding the right angle to shoot from could require you to move around a bit or get down low. Take care not to capture your own reflection in the image, as this will destroy the impact of the shot.



2 Select your camera settings

Set the camera to Aperture priority mode (A or Av) and choose an aperture value of f/5.6. This will create a depth-of-field large enough to keep the reflected subject in focus, but shallow enough to blur any ground that surrounds the edges of the puddle. In order to minimise camera shake, set the lowest ISO level that light conditions will allow to achieve a shutter speed of at least 1/125sec.



3 Find focus and take the shot!

Set the camera to its single-shot, single-point focusing mode. Using the camera's D-Pad, place the active AF point over an area of your reflected subject that contains plenty of contrast. Half-press the shutter to focus, then maintain the half-pressure while reframing to perfect the composition. Fully depress the shutter to capture your image. If the camera won't focus, switch to Manual focusing instead.

EXPERT TIP Use moving water for a stronger effect

If you want a sharp and crystal clear reflection, then static pools of water are ideal for this technique. Alternatively, and for even more abstract results, keep your eyes open for reflections in streams and rivers, or consider stirring up a puddle before taking your shot. The ripples on the surface will add even extra distortion to your reflected subject, enhancing the surreal feel.

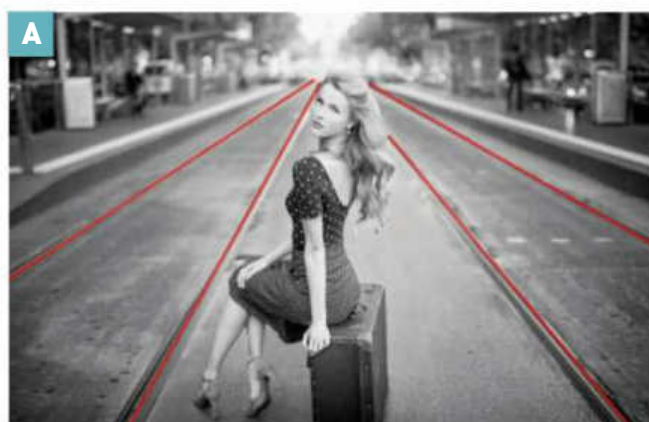


WHY THIS SHOT WORKS



Discover the elements that help Julia Ciavaglia's perfectly styled vintage portrait stand out from the crowd

WORDS BY MATTY GRAHAM



A Use of lead-in lines

Julia captured this image in the busy city of Melbourne, Australia, which features a vast tram system. Shooting at one of the empty tram stations, she was able to use the rails and the platform kerbs as lead-in lines. The model is positioned perfectly so that her head, the main focal point of the frame, intersects the horizon and all the lines in the picture lead directly to her gaze.

B Timed for the right light

In the midday sun, this portrait would have suffered from harsh contrast and ugly shadows, but Julia was wise to pick the best time of day to capture the right light for a flattering portrait. By shooting in the early evening glow, the subject is bathed in warm and even light, which is perfect for portraiture. The warm hue also helps enhance the retro feel of the frame.

C Shallow depth of field

Julia used a 50mm lens on a full-frame DSLR, which is a flattering focal length for portraiture. She also selected a large aperture of f/1.4, which produced a shallow depth-of-field. This kept her model sharp, but blurred the background to focus all the attention on her subject.

D Props and styling

When you're trying to create a certain theme or look to your image, props and styling can help get this message across to the viewer. From the choice of dress and the retro hairstyle, to the vintage suitcase her model is sitting on, Julia's styling was spot on and helped transport the viewer to yesteryear.

What was used

Camera Canon EOS 6D & 50mm f/1.4 lens

Exposure 1/320sec @ f/1.4, ISO 100

Software Photoshop Visit 500px.com/artaroundphotography





B

Shooting from above the subject's eye level, the converging lines in the shot lead the viewer's eye directly to the model's expression.

C

D

3 EXPERTS

1 EVERYDAY SUBJECT

STIMULATING COFFEE SHOTS

Take our creative challenge today!

There's a great deal of satisfaction to be found in framing up on a beautiful landscape or an architectural marvel. However, to foster greater creativity, we here at *Digital Photo* decided to set ourselves a photographic challenge. The rules are simple: every month, three members of the DP team are tasked with creating beautiful, memorable or thought-provoking images from everyday objects – the more mundane the better!

Using the most powerful tool in every photographer's arsenal – imagination – each must attempt to make an image that inspires and delights. In doing so, the chosen trio demonstrate how you too

can make creative thinking part of your photography toolkit. Processing negatives has always been a vital part of the creative process – this was as true in the analogue era as it is today – so the participants are free to post-process their shots if they like. All that's important is to make a great picture.

With our experts' inspiring images fresh in your mind, it's then over to you to put your own spin on the ideas they've used and create your own image. You don't need rucksacks full of fancy gear to capture creative imagery; working with what you have will force you to think outside the box and shoot things in a way that no-one has ever even thought of.

THE SUBJECT

Grab some coffee beans and brew up a fresh idea



OUR THREE PHOTOGRAPHERS

The team share their creative approach to making pics



Shot 1
Andy uses off-camera flash to shoot a vapour swirl



Shot 2
Matt explores texture in a big close-up



Shot 3
Matty finds time for a conceptual shot over a cuppa!

Andy uses



I'm a huge coffee fan, so I was very excited about this month's theme.

For me, a cup of java in the morning puts a smile on my face and sets me up for the rest of the day. I decided to try to capture that feeling photographically. Rather than have a model drink from a cup, I thought I'd make the beverage the star of the show. You often see good examples of that kind of shot adorning the walls of cafés. With creative use of lighting and depth-of-field, those images can make a sight as common as a cup of coffee look delectable and quite artistic.

I often employ a bit of post-processing to make a shot more interesting, but this time I decided to capture all the elements in camera, in a single exposure, and limit myself to a little image enhancement in Lightroom. Shooting from above tends to emphasise shapes and gives a 'designy' feel to a shot, but



By placing a flashgun out of shot behind the cup, Andy was able to highlight the vapour, making the coffee look fresh and piping hot.

careful lighting to capture swirls of vapour

I wanted something more photographic, with lots of artful blur, so I decided to shoot the cup side-on. Blurring the background is one of those things that always looks good and is best done in camera. There's nothing I like more than some nice, creamy bokeh, so I used a large aperture of f/2.8 to create as shallow a depth-of-field as possible. This, I hoped, would make the coffee really stand out from the background.

To make the coffee look extra fresh and inviting I wanted to capture the vapour rising from its surface. I love photos

that include illuminated water droplets, and as water vapour is essentially just tiny droplets, I placed a flashgun behind and below the cup to backlight the vapour and make it really shine. This also threw a little rimlighting on the bagel I used to dress the scene.

I had to repeatedly reheat the coffee every few minutes in the microwave to warm it up, but I placed a mark on the saucer to ensure the cup went back in the same place.

With all the elements in position, all I had to do was keep shooting until I got the perfect vapour wisp. It was a thoroughly enjoyable way to spend an hour!



Andy sketched out the scene to get the angle right before setting up his camera and props.

Lessons learned

Early on in the process I had a vague idea of what I wanted to shoot, but I couldn't quite visualise the framing. Trial and error would have eventually yielded dividends, but I decided to try and get a clearer idea of what I was aiming for by doing some sketches. Within minutes I had one that felt right, so I based my final shot on that sketch. I found it really helped me set up my shot and saved me a lot of time.

**“CREATIVE LIGHTING
AND DEPTH-OF-FIELD
MAKE COMMON SUBJECTS
LOOK ARTISTIC”**



Matt's macro shot reveals extraordinary detail and was created with his 50mm lens on backwards!



Matt goes macro to reveal unseen detail

SHOT 2

As this challenge was my first *Out Of The Ordinary* shoot, I was feeling the pressure to deliver a dramatic image from the start. Gathering some coffee beans in my hand, I mulled over a few creative ideas I could pursue, but couldn't get away from their fascinating texture and shape. On close inspection, every single one was unique – something that I'd never really stopped to consider before.

I quickly decided that I wanted to get even closer, and reveal more of this fantastic hidden detail in my shot.

While I don't own a dedicated macro lens, I do have a reversing ring that cost me less than £10 and a 50mm prime lens. Once fitted, this combination offered me a lifesize magnification. Now I could really capture a level of detail unseen by the eye.

“EVERY SINGLE BEAN WAS UNIQUE – SOMETHING I'D NEVER STOPPED TO CONSIDER BEFORE”



After setting up a pile of my subjects on a sheet of paper on a table, I arranged two deskclamps on either side to cross-light them, and locked my camera firmly in place on a tripod. With the camera switched to Manual mode, I set the aperture ring on the lens to f/11, and then adjusted the shutter speed until I had a good exposure that didn't bleach out the highlights. I activated Live View and

zoomed in on the screen to help me find accurate focus. I moved the beans on the paper sheet to get the focus and framing right.

With my macro photo captured I opened the file in Lightroom. A tweak to the White Balance warmed up the shot, and I also added a touch of Clarity to bring out the various textures.

The end result is an eye-catching close-up of a subject that, on any other day, I would probably have ignored.



Matt achieved his macro shot by placing a 50mm prime lens back to front on the camera. To do this he used a reversing ring, which cost just £10.

Lessons learned

With the shallow depth-of-field produced by focussing so close to a subject, and no automatic focus, sharp subjects were tricky to achieve. Initially I tried to handhold the camera and move it forwards until the beans fell into focus, but this resulted in more misses than hits. By tripoding-off the camera and gently moving the beans towards and away from the lens, I had far more success.

Time for a coffee?
Matty got creative
with a conceptual,
clean still-life.

SEND US YOUR PICTURES!

Now you've seen what the team has produced, have a go yourself. Send us your shots and they could appear in the UK's top photo mag! Email pics to: dpimages@bauermedia.co.uk

Matty creates a conceptual coffee clock

SHOT
3

I have a confession to make. I turn 37 this year and I've never had a cup of coffee. So when this month's subject was announced, I needed more inspiration than usual. Myself aside, the *Digital Photo* office runs on coffee (well, if you can call what comes out of our vending machine 'coffee') and every time the big hand strikes 12, I'll usually hear one of the team shout 'coffee time'.

The time element stuck in my head and I dreamed up a conceptual still-life that merged both ideas – a clock made from coffee-based elements.

The setup was straightforward and I used an Elinchrom two-light kit to provide some nice, clean flash lighting. For a background, I simply folded out my pop-up reflector and used the white side. When combined with the flash, this would create a pure white surface for that

high-end studio effect. As I needed a top-down view, I used a Manfrotto tripod that allows the centre column to be flipped out and positioned horizontally. One note of caution though – if you're using a heavier DSLR, this can cause the tripod to fall forward, so I added some ballast in the shape of some gym weights or your camera bag to keep the tripod steady.

As the beans were taking on the role of clock numbers, they had to be positioned carefully. By activating the camera's Live View mode,

I could see exactly where they appeared on the screen and could quickly reposition them so they lined up.

With the image taken, some slight processing was necessary. A couple of the beans were a little out of line, so I dragged out some Guides from Photoshop's Rulers to position overlay lines on the image. These helped as guides for placing the beans in exactly the right position. I'm happy with my first experience of coffee... but I still think I'll stick to drinking tea!



Want a nice, clean white background but don't have a studio? Use the white side of a collapsible reflector and light it with a flashgun.

Lessons learned

Using the tripod with the centre column in its horizontal setting is by far the trickiest element of this technique, as it can result in camera damage! I had some gym weights to keep my tripod stable, but if you don't have these, a shopping bag full of food tins will add some much-needed ballast to your setup and will stop the camera from tipping forward.

**"MY POP-UP REFLECTOR
COMBINED WITH FLASH
CREATED A HIGH-END
STUDIO EFFECT"**



CANINE CREATIONS



Alicja Zmyslowska's unique ability to photograph man's best friend produces shots that leave animal lovers asking... just how did she do that?

WORDS BY MATTY GRAHAM





The RAW file of this collie catching a frisbee was a little flat, so Alicja boosted Clarity and Contrast in Lightroom.

Four paws, a wet nose and a coat of golden fur was all it took to help ignite a passion for photography in Alicja Zmyslowska. Although the Poland-based photographer's father and brother were keen shooters, it wasn't until a golden retriever named Kiara entered her world that Alicja found the urge to pick up a camera. "At first, it was just about capturing moments together," she explains. "But with time, I expanded my knowledge and wanted to know how to make my images that bit more special." In fact, there's quite a lot special about Alicja's pictures and it's no exaggeration to say that she's made pet portraiture an art form. Her website is bursting with shots that capture natural pictures ▶



"I CAN CREATE MY OWN WORLD, WITH THE DOGS AS THE LEADING ACTORS. IT'S NOT ABOUT REALITY, MORE ABOUT ESCAPING IT"

of her clients' dogs, all in magically ethereal light, and the images are what every dog owner would love to take themselves. Portraits that really capture the character of their pet.

It's Alicja's approach to her photoshoots that makes her canine creations stand out. "I can create my own world, with dogs as the leading actors. It is not about depicting reality – it is more about escaping from it." Let's be clear though, this is more than a job for the 21-year-old – it's more of a calling. Rather than be motivated by Facebook 'likes' or simply bagging the next client, instead the camera is a way for Alicja to help the animals that inspire her so much. "I take pictures of dogs that are in need and looking for new homes. It's amazing that just through a few good photos a dog can be seen, noticed and find a new home."

A great example of how Alicja fuses her art and philanthropy took place in the autumn. She photographed an

18-year-old German Shepherd that had found itself in a shelter, and after posting the images on Facebook, the elderly pooch was adopted to see out its years in comfort.

"It is not the easiest thing to work with rescue dogs. It takes more time than a normal shoot, but is it worth every second."

There are important elements Alicja looks for when creating her fine-art portraits and everything starts with the location. Rather than head to the nearest park, she aims to find unique places that offer interesting colours but also suit the nature of the breed she's lining up in front of her lens. For example, wooded locations may suit gundogs better, while an indoor or city shoot will be better for toy breeds like chihuahuas. Once the location is sorted, being there for the best light is next on Alicja's checklist. Much like a landscape photographer, she prefers to shoot during the golden hours of

Above Anything can happen on a shoot and Alicja took advantage of this puppy settling down in her camera bag!

Top right By placing the owner next to the dog, it helps show the close bond that exists between the two.

Right Alicja used her 135mm f/2 lens to capture this portrait with a very shallow depth-of-field.

Far right Kiara, Alicja's own dog and her inspiration for picking up a camera, captured saying 'hi' on the beach. The strong curvature is down to the lens choice – a 8-15mm fisheye.

sunrise and sunset, where the low, directional light reveals detail and texture unseen in the midday sun.

A key feature in the majority of Alicja's images is the creative use of large apertures to ensure a very shallow depth-of-field. This makes the subject stand out in the frame and adds to the fine-art feel of the portrait. To achieve this technique, a peek inside Alicja's kit bag reveals a selection of fast lenses. A Sigma 35mm f/1.4 and Canon 85mm f/1.2 are the most-used optics, while a Canon 135mm f/2 is employed for images where the dogs are in motion. The lenses are paired with a 5D MkIII DSLR. To keep the lighting natural, a reflector is preferred to any flashgun.

A typical photoshoot for Alicja starts before the subject arrives as she scouts out the area to find the best views. The meet and greet with the client is important, as this reassures the dog that Alicja is friendly and gives an





**"THERE'S A FAIR AMOUNT OF
CLEANING DROOL OFF THE LENSES"**



ALICJA'S TOP 5 TIPS

1 Earn trust

A good relationship is important. It is a very individual thing and some dogs need more time than others.

2 Prepare well

Buy dog treats and squeaky toys to help keep the subject's attention.

3 Take your time

Give the dog time

to get used to its surroundings before you start shooting.

4 Find a great location

Pick out interesting and unusual places for a shoot. Areas you've not been to before will often give better pics.

5 Get low

Getting the camera to the dog's eyeline is vital for the best perspectives.

opportunity for the owner to ask for specific images. Shoots run from two to five hours depending on the age and fitness of the dogs, but Alicja prefers to have as much time as possible to avoid rushing any shots. Portraits with the owner come first, as the dog is still full of energy, and motion shots come second. Images are reviewed regularly to check for sharpness.

Like human subjects, each dog is different and Alicja has to tailor her approach to suit their individual characters. "Not every dog I work with will be super-friendly," she explains. "You have to remember that dogs are very good at expressing emotions, and a stressed and nervous dog will never look good." To help avoid these situations and to put the dog's welfare first, Alicja asks the owner if there's anything they should particularly look

Opposite Alicja selected an empty forest and mono treatment to reflect the solitude experienced by rescue dogs.

Top By shooting at sunrise, Alicja was rewarded with golden light on the Polish coastline.

Above Collies are generally well trained and receptive to posing. This image is Alicja's most popular and was captured on her Canon 5D MkIII with a 85mm lens. She used a large aperture of f/1.8 to limit the focus to a narrow band.

to avoid, such as busy locations with a lot of noise.

When the shoot is over, the RAW processing starts, and it's an area that Alicja doesn't neglect. The editing begins with image selection as the frames are whittled down to the best, and these are opened in Lightroom. "I work on each picture, correcting colour balance, enhancing saturation and contrast. I may spend up to three hours on each file," she explains. Alicja prefers to work on each shot manually, rather than rely on Presets. The majority of corrections are made with the Adjustment Brush for precise edits. The file is then opened in Photoshop if any major cloning or manipulation work is needed. The finished images exude quality and show the deep connection Alicja is able to make with her subject.

Like all photography though, things don't always go to plan and Alicja is happy to shed light on the lighter moments. "There can be a fair amount of cleaning drool off the lenses. Plus dogs have got excited and jumped on my head – you often have to suffer for your art!"

But it's the more tender moments that last longer in Alicja's memory, and sum up the unique niche she has crafted for herself – making a living doing something she loves, while also helping animals in need.

"A short while ago I was on a bus and saw a dog I had captured while he was in a shelter. He was with his owner and looked so happy! I had my camera with me so took a few shots. It was amazing to see how he'd flourished and the happiness in his eyes was just breathtaking!"



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72 Create custom vignettes to guide your viewer's eye



80 Blend in textures to give portraits an artistic feel



86 Transform colour scenes into beautiful black & white in RAW

On your **exclusive PhotoSkills CD** you'll find video lessons for all the projects. Watch them come to life on your computer screen!



VIDEO
LESSON
ON THE CD

68 Create amazing fragmentation effects using our free custom brush kit

+ Boost colour and tones using Gradient Maps **p76**

+ Get creative with text by blending in a message **p82**

+ Turn your pics into paintings in 60secs! **p130**

LEARN NEW SKILLS IN PHOTOSHOP

Discover how to make more of your pictures using *Digital Photo's* brilliant step-by-step techniques!

Nowadays, every picture you see published has been digitally enhanced. The changes made may be subtle tweaks or extensive reinventions, but the post-processing of images is part and parcel of modern photography.

The most popular software across the planet for making these adjustments is Photoshop (or one of its versions – see right), and over

the coming pages, our team of experts show you how to use it in a series of tutorials and accompanying video lessons.

Whether you're a newcomer taking your first steps in imaging, or a more seasoned photographer looking to make your imaging more productive, you'll find our advice, tips and techniques will provide a thorough grounding in the stuff you need to know. From core skills like RAW conversion and converting to mono, to advanced techniques like creating fragmentation effects, you'll find these guides to be indispensable as you earn your spurs in Photoshop!

Learn by doing

Since 1997, *Digital Photo* has been helping photographers achieve their potential, and

PHOTOSHOP ELEMENTS

THE CORE FEATURES & FUNCTIONS

VIEW TOOLS

Zoom in and out and scroll around the picture to work on small or large areas.

SELECTION TOOLS

Select a specific area of a picture so it can be edited independently.

ENHANCE TOOLS

Make changes to the pixels within a picture or a part you've selected.

DRAW TOOLS

Paint, erase or add text to your image using these features.

MODIFY TOOLS

Crop or recompose to alter the size and shape of the entire picture.

COLOR TOOLS

Choose the foreground and background colours that the tools will use.

TOOL OPTIONS BAR

Set up the tool you've selected so it works in the way you want it to.

TOOLBOX

This palette contains all the tools used to make changes. Click on a tool to select it, and further options will appear in the Tool Options bar.

MENU BAR

Each item in the menu bar at the top gives access to a drop-down list of options. If our tutorials ask you to go to **File→Open** or **Window→Layers**, this is where you do it.



one thing we've discovered is that people learn by *doing*. Our clear, step-by-step guides take you through the image-editing process, and the very pictures used by our experts are supplied in the Start Images folder on the disc, so you can load them up and follow the exact technique in your own software.

What's more, all our projects are supported by exclusive, in-depth video lessons, produced by the same team. These guide you through the project from start to finish, and you can watch them over and over until you've got the technique cracked.

It's a fast, highly effective way of learning, and by using the videos in conjunction with the tutorials in the mag, you'll have a sound command of the skills you need to improve and enhance every picture you take!

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LESSONS

Learn with DIGITAL PHOTO

1 Watch the video lesson

Load the disc, click on the video you want to watch, and our experts will walk you through.

2 Follow the steps

Open the start images into your software and follow the tutorial in the magazine.

3 Produce a pro image

Complete the project then use the technique you've learnt to enhance your own shots.



EXPERT MODE

Click on this to enter the most feature-rich display mode for all projects.

LAYERS PANEL

One of the most important palettes for creative imaging work, this is a core feature of Elements and Photoshop.

CREATE A NEW LAYER

Click to make a blank Layer.

NEW ADJUSTMENT LAYER

Click to bring up a list of Adjustment Layer options, and choose the one you want.

TRASH

Get rid of unwanted Layers by dragging and dropping them on this icon.

LAYER OPACITY

A slider lets you fade a Layer between 0% (transparent) and 100% (fully opaque) to control how it appears.

BLENDING MODES

A drop-down list lets you select from a large number of choices to affect how the Layer interacts with the Layer below.

LAYER MASK

Hides (black) or reveals (white) part of the Layer to which it's attached.

LAYER NAME

Double-click here to give the Layer a new name.

LAYER THUMBNAIL

A small-scale image to help you identify the Layer's contents.

SHOW/HIDE LAYER

Switch Layers on and off so you can see their effect on the image.

PANEL OPTIONS

Layers is the default, though you can display other options, or customise your workspace under the More icon.

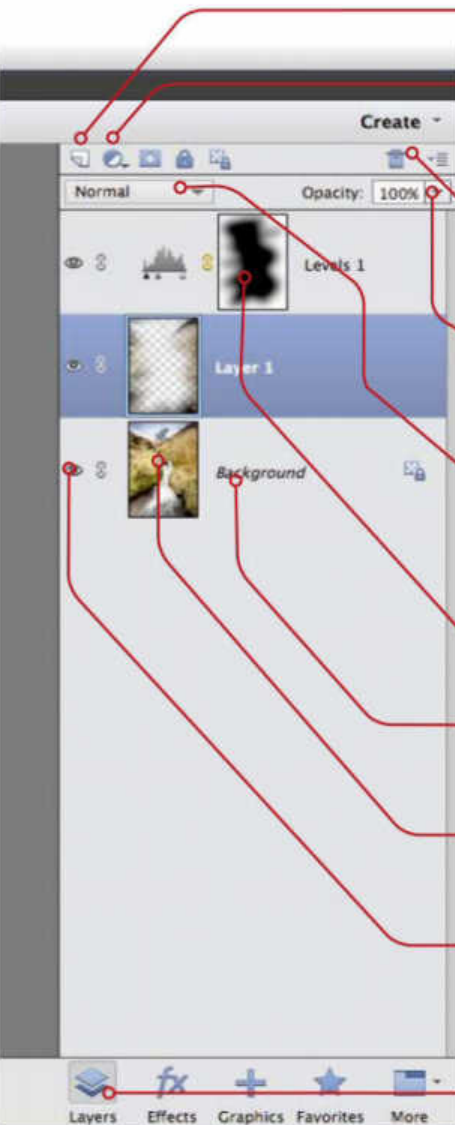


Image-editing software options



PHOTOSHOP ELEMENTS 14 £60

Photoshop Elements is the stripped-down version of Photoshop targeted at enthusiasts. It offers the core features that photographers need and sports a similar interface to the professional Photoshop CC. Along with Layers, Layer Masks and a host of Selection tools, Elements offers a basic but effective version of Adobe Camera Raw for editing and enhancing RAW files.



PHOTOSHOP CC £8.57 monthly

Photoshop CC (Creative Cloud) is the professional version of Photoshop. It's only available as a subscription, so you pay £8.57 monthly to use it. The deal includes Lightroom 6/CC so there's no need to buy this separately. As well as the tools in Elements, Photoshop offers Curves, the Pen tool, and Color Balance. It also features an advanced RAW converter, which shares the same RAW engine as Lightroom 6/CC.



LIGHTROOM 6 £104

Photoshop Lightroom is a RAW workflow package offering a pro-level RAW converter and image management features for cataloguing your shots. It shares the same RAW conversion functions as Photoshop CC, but has a different interface. Lightroom doesn't feature Layers for creating shots with multiple images, but many photographers who don't want to subscribe to Photoshop CC find a combination of the standalone Lightroom and Elements meets their needs. For more info on the above packages, visit www.adobe.com/uk

Opening pics into Photoshop

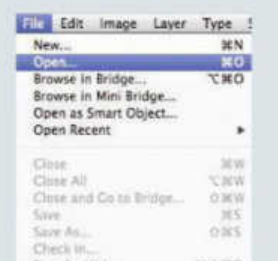
A card reader is the easiest way of transferring pics from your camera's card to a computer. Most PCs and Macs now have an SD card slot built in. Drag the pics from the card reader to a new folder you've created and named to copy them. Once copied, they can be opened...

1 Load Photoshop, then go to **File→Open** and navigate through your folders to find the pics. Click on the shot you want, then click on **Open**.

2 Open the folder with your pics in, and right-click (Ctrl+click on a Mac) on the file you want to open. From the options, select **Open With→Photoshop** (or **Elements**).

3 Open the folder with your pictures in, and drag and drop the shot you want onto the PS/PSE icon on your desktop.

4 Open your picture folder, then drag and drop the pic you want into the main workspace window in the Photoshop/Elements interface.



FRAGMENT YOUR PORTRAIT PICS THE EASY WAY



Discover how to make a cool dispersion technique using our free brush effects pack

TECHNIQUE & PICS BY ANDY HEATHER

At a glance

You'll learn How to make a subject break up and fragment into pieces

You'll need Photoshop or Elements

Time required 15 minutes

Difficulty level Medium

On the disc

Video lessons Watch as Andy runs through this entire technique on your computer screen.

Start images Follow along on your computer using *Sky.jpg* and *Flying Girl.jpg*, which can be found in the Start Images folder.

The DP team recently received an email from reader James DiBiase asking for an easy way to create this cool 'dispersion' technique that often appears in glossy ads and on the boxes for the latest image-editing software. James had assumed that actually making one was far too difficult for mere mortals, right? Well, that used to be the case – but no longer! The team here at *Digital Photo* sprang into action and devised a totally new and surprisingly straightforward method that's accessible to all. Believe it or not, we've made it possible for anyone with an interest in improving their Photoshop skills to execute this seemingly advanced technique in eight simple steps using a set of brushes, and they're free with this month's issue!



Before



We shot the sky and the model separately to make them easier to blend in Photoshop. We shot the model leaning backwards on tip-toe with her face up while holding on to a chair. We were careful to let her hair fall downward, so that when this image is flipped onto its side, the model looks like she's flying through the air with her hair flowing gracefully behind her.

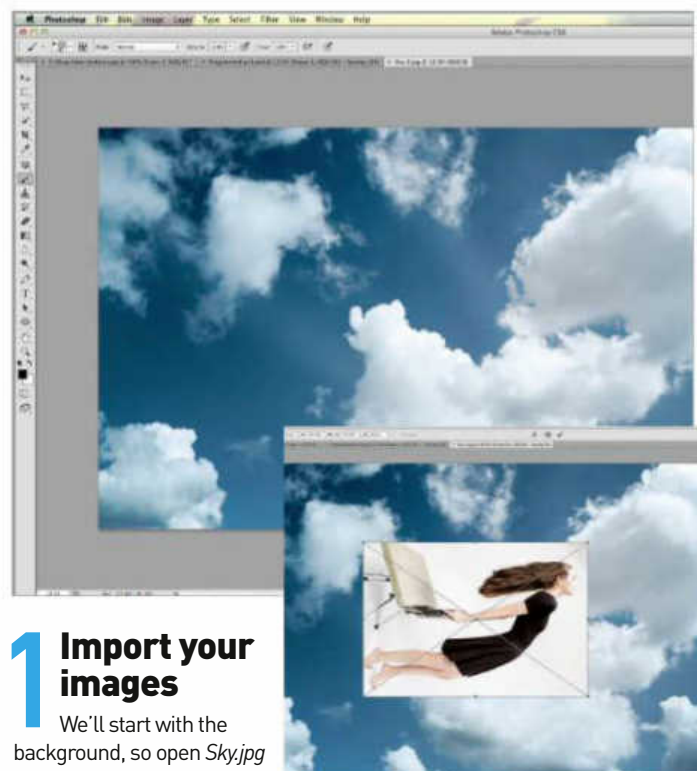
ANDY HEATHER / BAUER





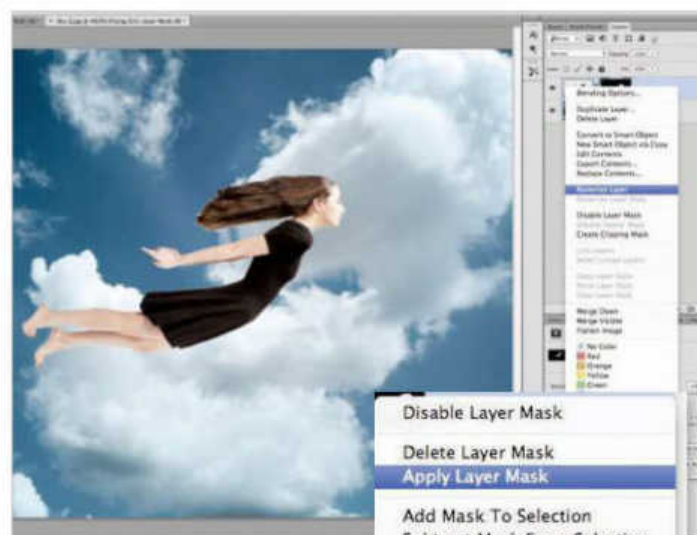
After

Using our free fragmentation brush kit, anyone can add a modern dispersion effect to a shot.



1 Import your images

We'll start with the background, so open *Sky.jpg* into Photoshop or Elements by going to **File→Open** and selecting it from the Start Images folder. Next, drop in the shot of the model leaning on a chair with her head tilted backwards. To do that, go to **File→Place** and locate *Flying Girl.jpg* in the Start Images folder. You'll need to rotate it 90 degrees so she's facing the right direction. To do that, hover your mouse outside one of the corner handles until it becomes a curved, double-headed arrow, then hold down the **Shift** key and drag to rotate it. Hit **Return** when you're done.



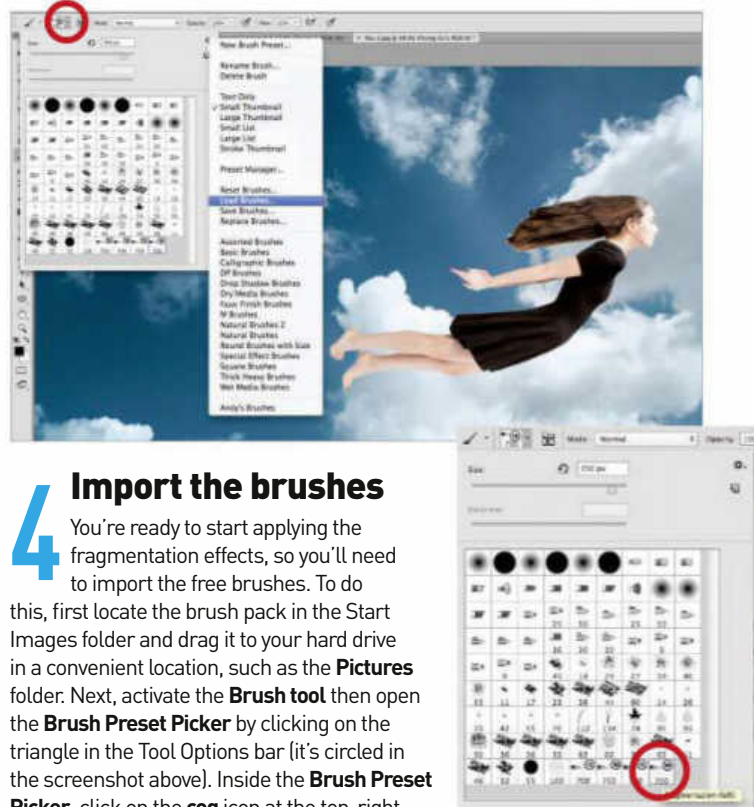
3 Cut out the model

Next, go to **Select→Modify→Contract** and type in **1px** before clicking **OK**. That will contract the Selection slightly, which helps to avoid white outlines around your cutout. Now you've got your Selection made, hit the **Add Layer Mask** icon (it's at the bottom of the Layers panel in Photoshop and the top in Elements) to hide the background and show the girl. Right-click on the Layer in the Layers panel and select **Rasterize Layer**, then right-click on the Mask thumbnail (the white rectangle next to the image thumbnail) and select **Apply Layer Mask**. This will remove the unused pixels along with the Layer Mask.



2 Make a Selection

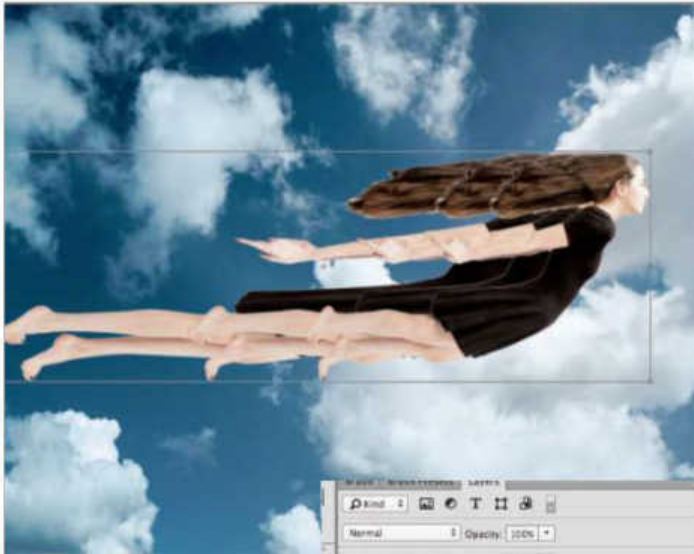
Next you need to make a Selection around the model so you can cut her out. The easiest way to start that selection process is with the **Quick Selection tool**. Activate the tool and make sure **Sample All Layers** is unticked, then click and drag over the model to select her. The detailed areas like the face and hands won't be perfect so you'll need to refine the Selection. To do this, select the **Polygonal Lasso tool** and hold down the **Shift** key. When you see a small **+** icon, that means you can add to the Selection. Click repeatedly to draw a path around anything that should be selected. Double-click to close the path. If you want to subtract anything from the Selection, repeat that process holding down the **Alt** key instead of the **Shift** key.



4 Import the brushes

You're ready to start applying the fragmentation effects, so you'll need to import the free brushes. To do this, first locate the brush pack in the Start Images folder and drag it to your hard drive in a convenient location, such as the **Pictures** folder. Next, activate the **Brush tool** then open the **Brush Preset Picker** by clicking on the triangle in the Tool Options bar (it's circled in the screenshot above). Inside the **Brush Preset Picker**, click on the **cog** icon at the top-right corner and from the menu select **Load Brushes...** Locate the brushes on your hard-drive, then click on **Open**. Your new brushes will now appear at the bottom of the **Brush Preset Picker**. Select **Fragmentation (left)**.

CREATE FRAGMENTATION EFFECTS



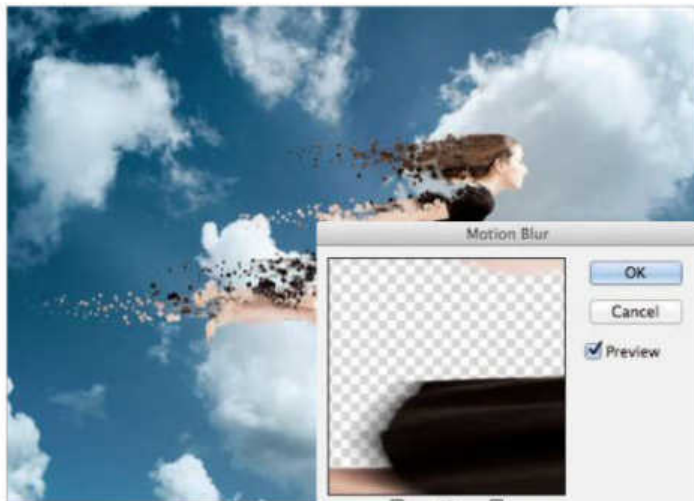
5 Duplicate & stretch the flying girl shots

Duplicate the model twice by hitting **Ctrl+J** twice. Select the lowest of the three Layers, hit **Ctrl+T** to activate **Free Transform** and drag the left-side handle to the left to stretch the image, as in the screenshot above. Select the next Layer up and stretch it out less. Hide the lower two duplicates by clicking on the 'eye' icon alongside the Layer thumbnails. Select the top Layer and add a Layer Mask to it by clicking on the **Add Layer Mask** icon again. Press **Ctrl+I** to invert the colours, making the mask black. This will hide the model entirely.



6 Begin fragmenting

Now, select **Fragmentation (left)** and with white as your foreground colour, paint into the mask to reveal the model. You should have a fragmented image of the model, as in the screenshot above. You want the right-hand edge of the model to be unfragmented, so select a round Brush, set the **Hardness** to **80%** and paint white into the Mask to reveal the right-hand edge.



7 Add more fragments

Select the next Layer down, make it visible and add a Layer Mask, as you did in the previous steps. Hit **Ctrl+I** again to invert the colours in the Mask. Hit **B** to activate the **Brush** tool and use the same **Fragmentation (left)** brush as before, to paint in some more fragments. When you have a good effect, repeat this same process for the Layer below. As you add the effects, resize the brush using **[** and **]** to vary the size of the fragments you create. To make it look as though the fragments are moving, select the middle fragment Layer and go to **Filter→Blur→Motion Blur**. Enter **0 degrees** as your **Angle** and use a **Distance** of **35px** to turn the fragments into streaks.



8 Tidy up & save

If anything looks wrong or distracting, use a round brush (**Hardness 80%**) to make corrections. Turn on the visibility of each Layer in turn to find out which Layer the unwanted element is on. Then click on the Layer Mask icon for that Layer to make it active. Paint in black to hide any unwanted areas. If you go too far, paint in white to show them again. When you're happy with the overall effect, go to **File→Save As** and give your shot a new name. Save it as a **JPEG** for a final version, or use the **Photoshop (PSD)** format to retain all your Layers. This will allow you to make further refinements in the future.

At a glance

You'll learn How to direct your viewer's eye to the core points of interest with a bespoke vignette

You'll need

Photoshop or Elements

Time required

10 minutes

Difficulty level

Easy

GUIDE THE EYE WITH A CUSTOM VIGNETTE



Focus attention on the key elements of your shot by subtly darkening and blurring other areas

TECHNIQUE & PICS BY JON ADAMS

On the disc

Video lessons

Watch as Jon runs through this entire technique on your computer screen.

Start image

Jon's *Stream.jpg* picture can be found in the Start Images folder, though any pic can be used.

When you frame up on a shot, there are certain components within the scene that are more important than others. These key ingredients are the parts you want your viewer to examine, and the more you make of them, the more impact your picture will have.

Directing the viewer's eye to these elements can be done with great composition alone, but there's a nifty way of reinforcing them in image editing. A vignette is a slight darkening towards the edge of the

picture that occurs naturally with many lenses. It's actually an optical defect that occurs through light fall-off, but it works creatively to draw the eye towards the centre of the frame.

In this technique, we'll look at how you can create custom vignettes to ensure you're making the most of your scene, and controlling how your audience perceives what you've captured. Although we've applied it to a landscape here, you can try the same approach for any subject you shoot.

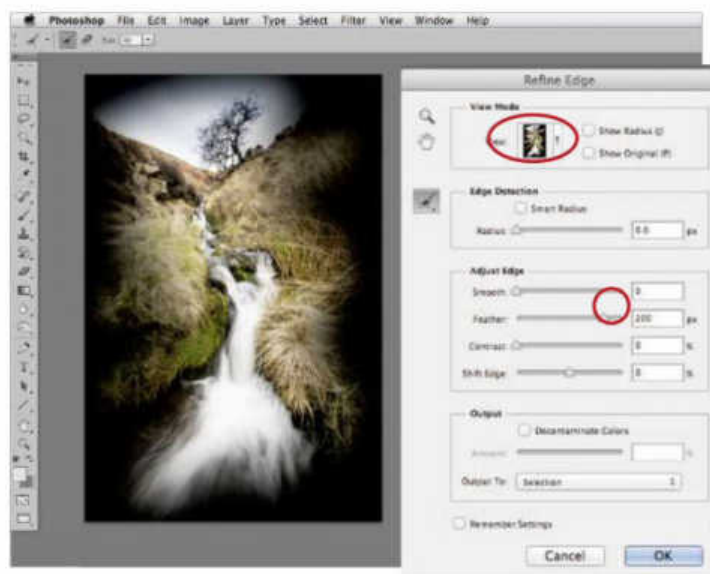


The key subjects are the waterfall and tree, and these can be made more dominant by darkening and blurring the edges of the frame.



1 Open your picture and create a custom shaped Selection around the edge

Open the pic you want to enhance into Photoshop or Elements, or use *Stream.jpg* from the Start Images folder. Once it's up on screen, select the **Lasso tool** from the Toolbox. Now draw around the edge of the image, creating shapes that lead in to the key areas of importance in your shot. If you do this in stages, rather than in one go, you can add to the Selection by holding the **Shift** key and drawing with the Lasso. If you make a mistake, you can subtract an area from the Selection by holding the **Alt** key while drawing. You'll end up with a ragged border around the picture that's surrounded by 'marching ants'.



2 Soften the edge of the Selection

It's essential to soften the edge of the Selection you've made, as this will help the changes you're about to make blend in seamlessly with the remaining part of the picture. To do this, click on the **Refine Edge** button in the Tool Options bar. Pick the **On Black** View Mode to give you a clear indication of how your vignette will work. You'll see a hard-edged display of the Selection you've made, but move the **Feather** slider to the right and the edges will soften, giving a more subtle result. How large a Feather value you use will depend on the size of your image and the amount of softness you want, but on the example pic, we used a setting of **200px**. Once you've set the appropriate amount, click **OK** to confirm.

After

By darkening and blurring the outer margins of the pic, the viewer's focus is directed towards the key elements.

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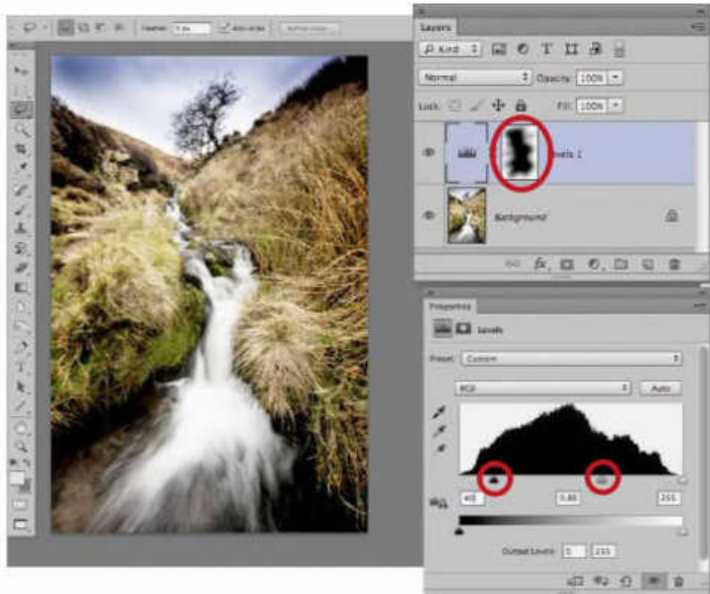


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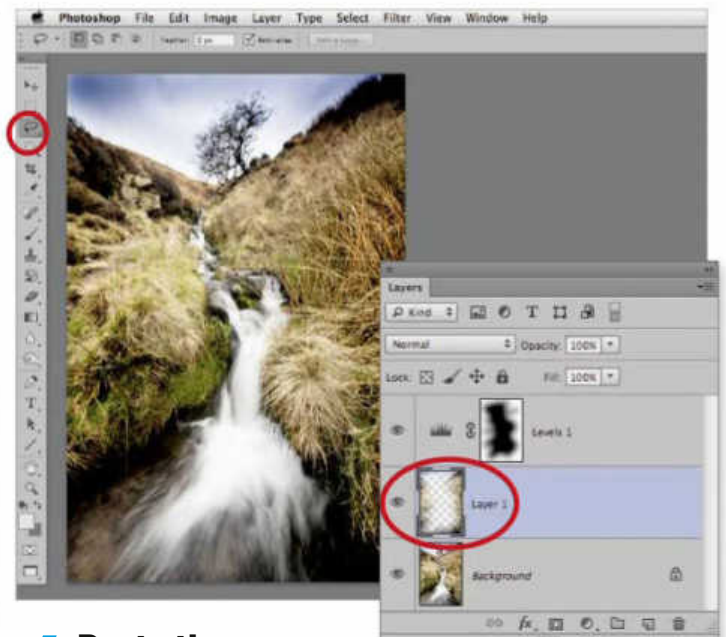
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3 Darken the edges of the images with a Levels adjustment

In the Layers panel (**Window→Layers**) click on the **Adjustment Layer** icon and choose **Levels** from the dropdown list. The Levels palette will pop up, but you'll also see a Layer Mask appear alongside the Adjustment Layer thumbnail. This will show the Selection you've made in black and white. Before doing anything else, you need to make sure that the inner part of this Mask is black. If it's white, click on the Mask thumbnail and hit **Ctrl+I** to invert the colours. Now click on the Adjustment Layer thumbnail to the left. The Levels palette will return, and you'll see three sliders under the Histogram graph. Move the Shadows and Midtones sliders to the right to darken the edges of the picture.



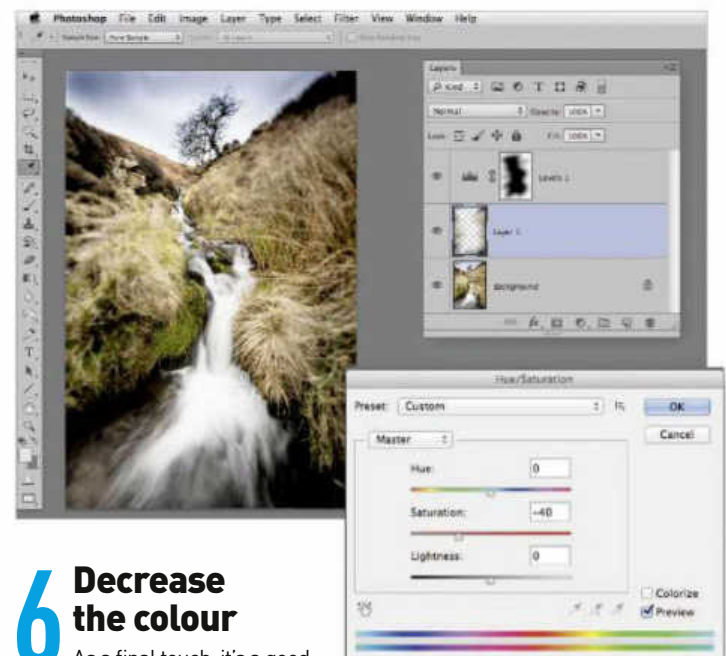
4 Paste the vignetted area onto a separate Layer

When adding a vignette, the aim is to hem in the image and focus the viewer's attention on the important parts of the shot. So if you defocus the surrounding parts, you'll achieve this even better. Adding blur is easy in Photoshop, but you first need to select the right area, or the blurring will cover the entire image. To reselect the part around the edge, hold **Ctrl** and click directly on the Layer Mask's thumbnail. With the 'marching ants' back on screen, now click on the **Background** Layer to make it active. Hit **Ctrl+J** and the area in the Selection will be pasted into a new Layer. This will appear above the **Background**, but beneath the Adjustment Layer.



5 Add some Gaussian Blur to soften the vignette area

To defocus this area, go to **Filter→Blur→Gaussian Blur**. In the dialogue box, increase the **Radius** slider until you have a subtle degree of blurring around the edge of the image. As with the Feather setting you adjusted earlier, how much blur you use will depend on the size of your image and the effect you want, but provided the **Preview** box is ticked, you'll see the blurry effect directly on the image. For the example image we used a setting of **10px**. Once you've added your blur, click **OK** and the effect will be applied.



6 Decrease the colour

As a final touch, it's a good idea to ease back the intensity of colour in the blurred area to tone down the vibrancy and direct the viewer toward the centre even more. To do this, make sure the blurred vignette Layer is still active in the Layers panel, and then hit **Ctrl+U** to open the Hue/Saturation palette. To decrease the colour intensity, drag the **Saturation** slider to the left. We used for a setting of **-40**, though you may need more or less than this on your own pics. When you're happy with the setting, click **OK**, and your enhanced image will be complete. To save it, go to **File→Save As**, and save it under a new name using the JPEG format.

GRADIENT MAPS



Develop your Photoshop skills with this lesser-known but incredibly versatile tool

TECHNIQUE & PICS BY ANDY HEATHER

If you've already got a good basic understanding of Photoshop and you're looking for something a little more advanced, this Photoshop Masterclass about Gradient Maps is for you. A Gradient Map is a tool that allows you to edit colours and brightness simultaneously.

To be precise, it allows you to reassign (or re-map, if you will) the shadows and the highlights in your image to totally new tonal values and to give each its own colour tint. As such, a Gradient Map can be used to adjust the contrast, brightness and colour

tint of an image in one fell swoop. Because so few people know about Gradient Maps, they offer the perfect opportunity to give your shots an original look that'll make them stand out from the pack. Gradient Maps can be accessed directly through the **Image → Adjustments** menu or applied via an Adjustment Layer, which gives more versatility. This masterclass will show you how to stack Gradient Maps and even employ Layers Masks to draw out the potential in a shot. Let's get started by having a look at the dialogue boxes involved.



Before

This image was shot against a bright sky. The building and the tree are underexposed, the sky's overexposed and the colours are flat.

ANDY HEATHER

GRADIENT EDITOR THE CORE FEATURES & FUNCTIONS

PRESETS

This area contains thumbnail-sized previews of pre-installed Gradients that can be used as Gradient Maps.

NAME

This box is where you type the name of your Gradient, if you have created a new, custom Gradient that you'd like to save.

GRADIENT TYPE

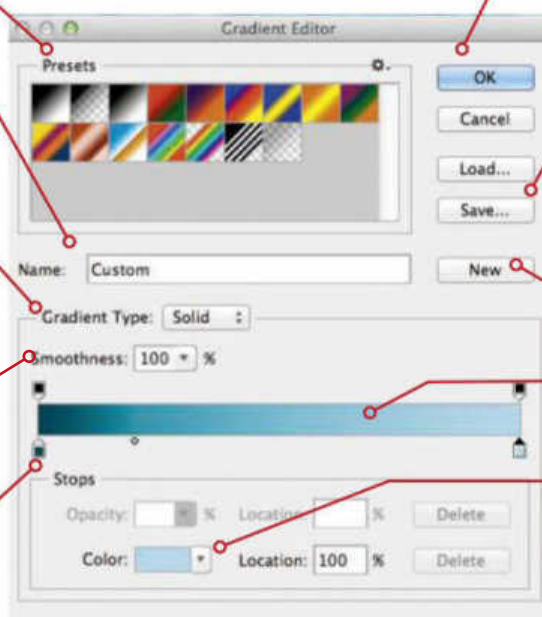
This dropdown menu gives you the choice of Solid or Noise as your Gradient Type. In this tutorial, we'll be using the Solid type.

SMOOTHNESS

Adjusting the Smoothness percentage value allows you to alter the way the colours of your gradient blend into one another.

COLOUR STOPS

Colours Stops give the colours in your Gradient. The one on the left alters the appearance of shadows. The one on the right alters Highlights. Colour Stops in the middle alter the midtones.



OK

This button closes the Gradient Editor and applies the selected Gradient to your image as a Gradient Map.

LOAD/SAVE

These buttons allow you to save a Gradient to your hard-drive or to load a previously saved Gradient into the Gradient Editor.

NEW

This button adds the current Gradient to the Preset area above.

GRADIENT PREVIEW

This bar shows you the colours employed in your Gradient and how they blend into one another.

COLOR

This dropdown menu opens a Colour Picker where you can select, preview and assign a new colour to the selected Colour Stop.



After

The shadows have been lifted and a tint has been added, making it look warm and summery.

GRADIENT MAPS WHAT YOU CAN DO WITH THEM

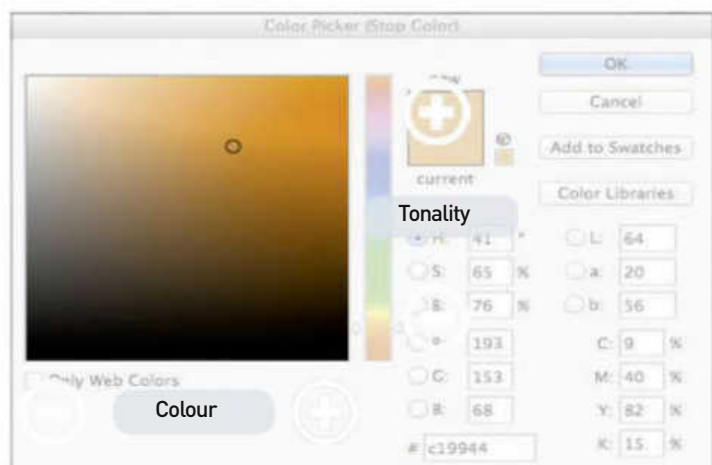


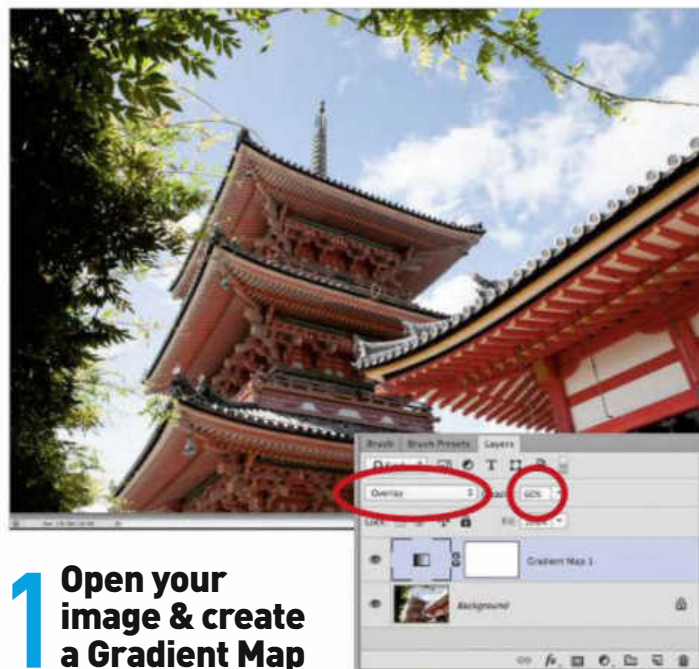
Independently edit Highlights and Shadows

The colour you select for the left-hand Colour Stop will be applied (or 'mapped') to the shadows, which are represented by the left-hand edge of the Histogram. The colour you select for the right-hand Colour Stop will affect the highlights, which are on the right-hand side of the Histogram.

Change brightness and colour simultaneously

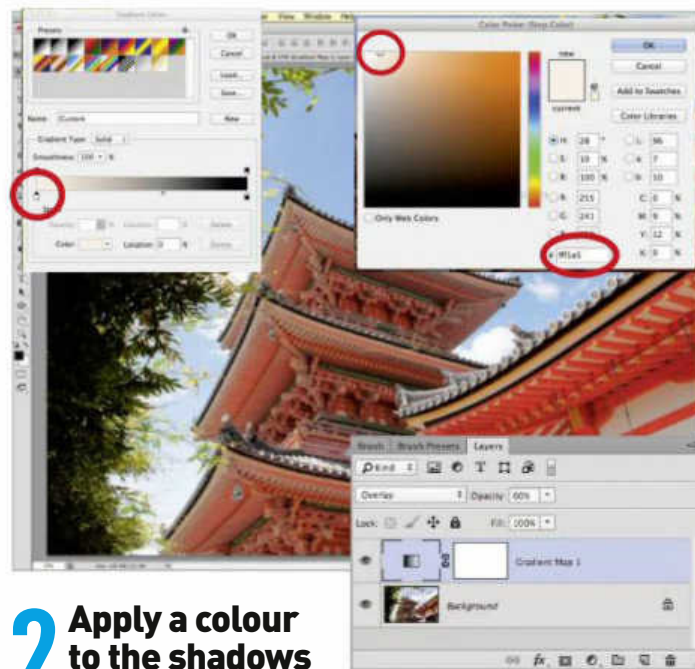
After double-clicking on a Color Stop, you can select a colour to apply. Choosing from the top part of the Color Picker will make your shot brighter and the bottom will make it darker. Clicking on a colour from the right-hand side will apply more of the displayed colour, the left-hand side will introduce less.





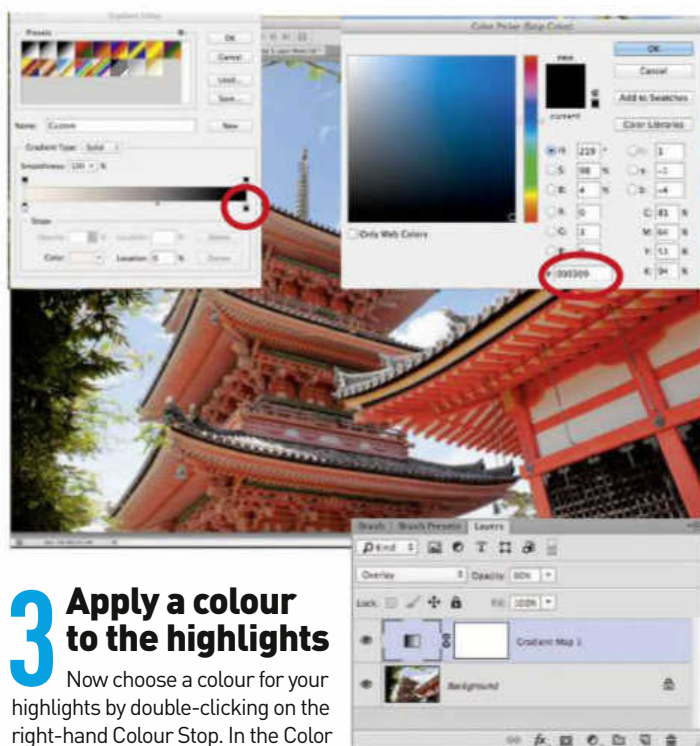
1 Open your image & create a Gradient Map

Open a shot in need of a little improvement into Photoshop or Elements (Gradient Maps are featured on both packages). If you'd like to practise with our example shot, you'll find *Temple.jpg* in the Start Images folder. Once it's open, create a Gradient Map by clicking on the **Create new fill or adjustment layer** icon (it's at the bottom of the Layers panel in Photoshop and the top in Elements) and selecting **Gradient Map**. Change the **Blending Mode** of this new Adjustment Layer to **Overlay** by clicking on where it says **Normal** and selecting **Overlay** from the dropdown list. Change the **Opacity** of the Layer to **60%** by clicking on where it says **100%** and dragging the slider to the left.



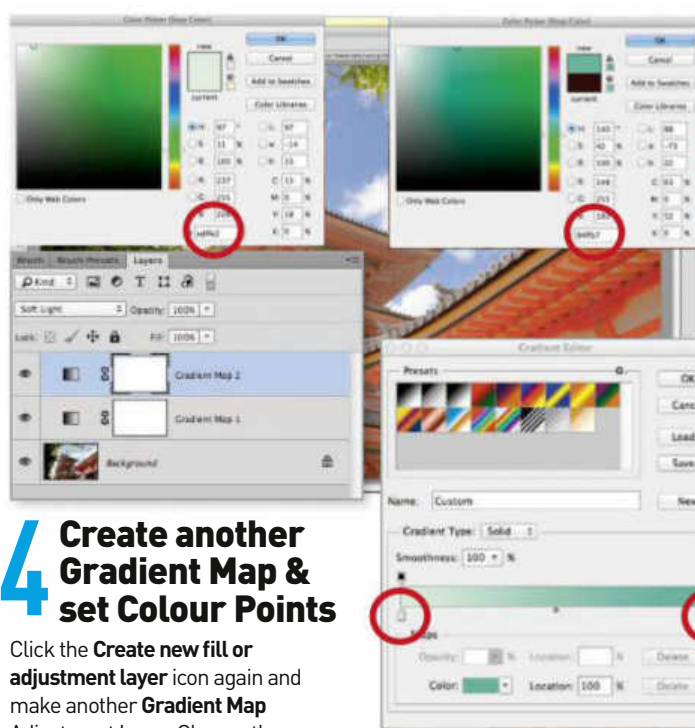
2 Apply a colour to the shadows

Double-click on the Gradient Map thumbnail icon to open the **Properties** window. In the **Properties**, click once on the Gradient preview to open the **Gradient Editor**. At the bottom of the Gradient Editor you'll see another preview of the Gradient. Under it are two squares, called Colour Stops. Double-click on the left-hand Colour Stop. This will allow you to pick a colour that will be applied to the shadows. In the Color Picker, click on the box next to the hashtag at the bottom and type in **fff1e5** to get the colour we used. The cursor will be positioned over the colour corresponding to this hexadecimal colour code (aka hex code) you just typed in. Click **OK**. For your own colours, you can input RGB numbers or click directly on the Color Picker.



3 Apply a colour to the highlights

Now choose a colour for your highlights by double-clicking on the right-hand Colour Stop. In the Color Picker, enter the hex code **000309** (or select whatever you want to use). In the Color Picker, you'll notice that colours at the top are brighter than those at the bottom, and colours on the right-hand side are more saturated than those on the left. The colour we've selected is a dark blue that will reduce the luminosity of the highlights in the shot, making the sky look slightly darker and more saturated.



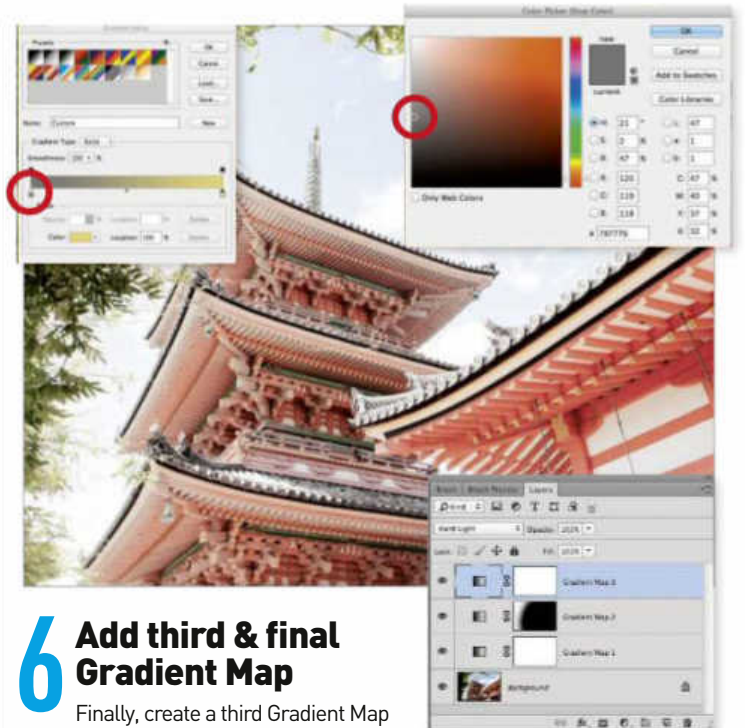
4 Create another Gradient Map & set Colour Points

Click the **Create new fill or adjustment layer** icon again and make another **Gradient Map** Adjustment Layer. Change the Blending Mode to **Soft Light**. Navigate to the Gradient Editor as you did in Step 2 above. Set the left-hand Colour Stop to **edffe2** and the right colour-stop to **94ffb7**. These light green colours are intended to brighten up the tree on the left-hand side. At the moment the Gradient Map is affecting the entire image which is making the temple look odd, so next you need to limit the effect to the tree and hide it everywhere else.



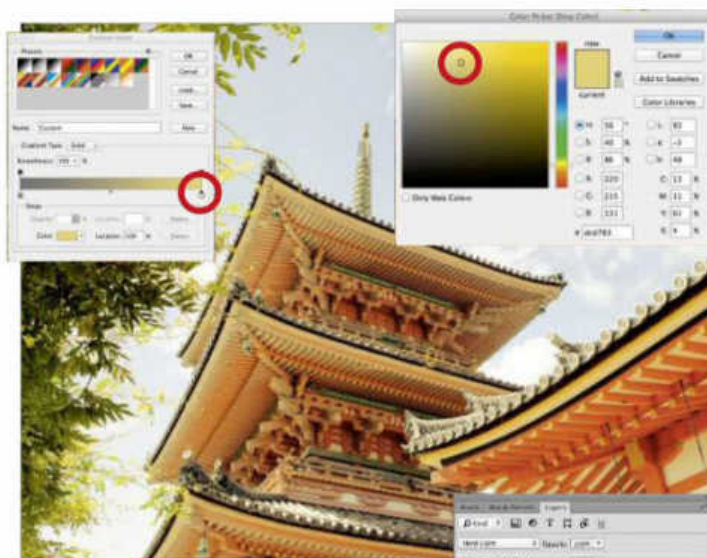
5 Mask the Gradient Map to brighten the tree on the right

To limit the effect to the tree on the left, click once on the **New layer mask** icon. It's at the bottom of the Layers Panel in Photoshop and the top in Elements. With the Mask selected, activate your **Brush tool** and with a soft, black brush, paint into the image. You'll see the effects of the Gradient Map being hidden anywhere you paint black. To reinstate the effect, simply paint in white instead. Keep hiding the effect until it's only visible on the tree.



6 Add third & final Gradient Map

Finally, create a third Gradient Map Adjustment Layer and this time, set the Blending Mode to **Hard Light**. This Gradient Map is intended to brighten the image further, simultaneously lifting the shadows and adding a warm colour hue. Work on the shadows first by double-clicking on the left-hand Colour Stop and entering the hex code **787776**. This colour is on the left-hand side of the Color Picker, meaning it is grey and therefore adds no hue to the shadows. However, it is light enough to increase the tonal value of the shadows, brightening them a little. Click **OK** to accept the changes and close the Color Picker.



7 Set the highlights Colour Point

Double-click on the right-hand Colour Stop to edit it. In the Color Picker, enter the hex code **dcd783**. This is a bright yellow colour that will make all the highlights in the shot look warmer, giving the image a more summery look overall. Now all that remains is to save your shot with a new name, so go up to **File→Save As** and give your shot a creative new title. If you plan to share it online, save it as a **JPEG (JPG)** to keep the file size nice and small. If you want to continue to edit the shot later, use the **Photoshop Document (PSD)** format instead.

+ EXPERT TIP Gradient Maps for B&W



Oh, and one more thing...

Gradient Maps aren't just great for colour images – they can be used for making beautiful black & whites too. One way to do this is to create a **Gradient Map** Adjustment Layer and change the Blending Mode to **Overlay** (as you did in Step 1). This Layer will be used to lighten or darken the shadows and highlights, depending on the kind of look you want to create. At this stage, the image will still be in colour. To make it black & white, create a second **Gradient Map Adjustment Layer** and leave the Blending Mode on **Normal**. Your image will now appear in black and white. Continue to tweak the lower Gradient Map until you have the mono look you're after!

At a glance

You'll learn How to apply textures to portraits pics for a creative look

You'll need Photoshop or Elements

Time required

10 minutes

Difficulty level
Easy

ADD TEXTURES FOR AN ARTISTIC PORTRAIT



Harness the power of Blending Modes and Layer Masks for an atmospheric textured portrait

TECHNIQUE & PICS BY GAVIN HOEY

On the disc

Video lesson

Watch as Gavin runs through this entire technique on your computer screen.

Start images

The pictures Gavin used can be found in the Start Images folder on the disc.

Portraits can be one of the most compelling forms of photography – the human eye is, after all, naturally drawn to faces. But with so many great portrait photographers in the world, how can you make your shots stand out? A textured portrait is a great way to enhance the tone and mood of an image. Even better, this technique gives you the chance to hide cluttered backgrounds which can distract from an otherwise perfect portrait.

However, combining portraits with textures isn't simply a matter of

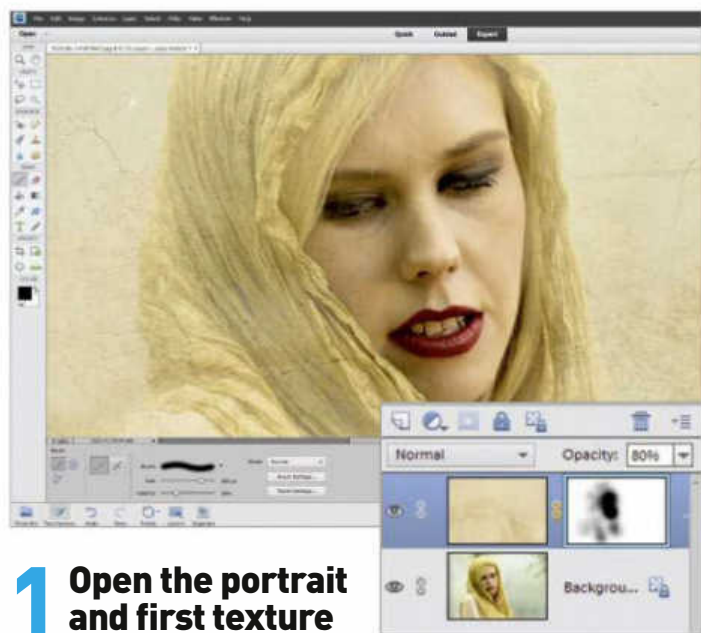
putting one on top of the other. It takes time to find the perfect combination. The goal is for the textures to subtly complement the original portrait and not to overpower it.

When it comes to image selection, a portrait with a clean, uncluttered background is a great place to start. But it's not a total necessity, as the textures will go a long way to covering up all sorts of distractions. We've included some free textures with the mag, but you can easily make your own by shooting plaster, wood or even paper.

Before

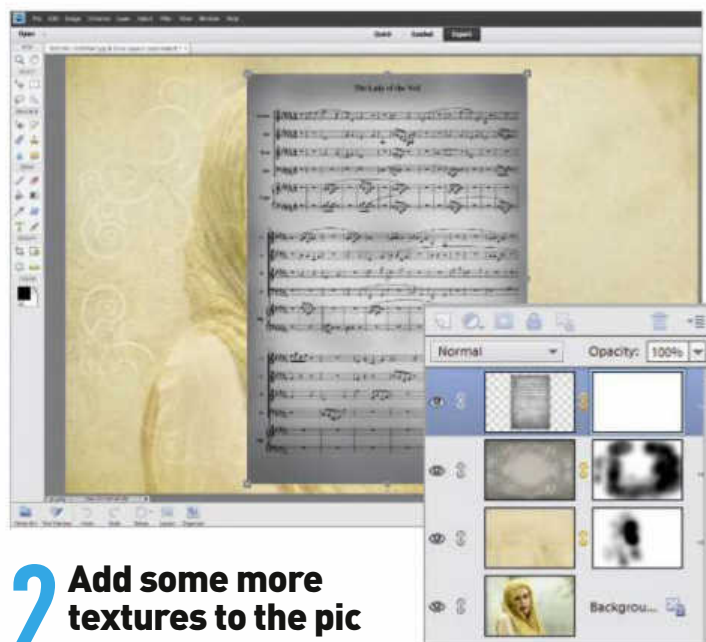


The original shot has a relatively plain, blurred background. This is an ideal base on which to place textures and makes this image a good candidate for this technique.



1 Open the portrait and first texture

Start by opening *Texture 1 Portrait.jpg* from the Start Images folder. Press **Ctrl+A** to select it, followed by **Ctrl+C** to copy it, and then close the image with **Ctrl+W**. Open *Texture 1 Portrait.jpg* and press **Ctrl+V** to paste the texture on top of the portrait. Lower the **Layer Opacity** to around 80% and then add a **Layer Mask** by clicking **Layer→Layer Mask→Reveal All**. Press **D** followed by **X** to set the foreground colour to black and then select the **Brush tool (B)**. To keep more control go to the **Tool Options** and set the brush **Opacity** to 30% with a size of around 800 pixels. Painting onto the face will remove some texture, and the more you paint into the Mask, the less texture you'll see. Aim to remove the texture from the skin.



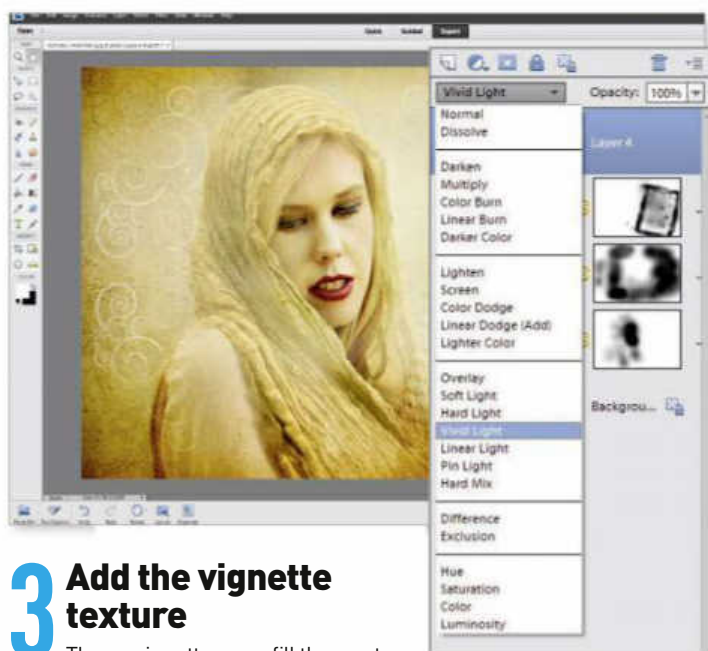
2 Add some more textures to the pic

Open *Texture 3 Scrolls.jpg*, then copy and paste it in as before. In the Layers panel, change the Blending Mode from **Normal** to **Overlay** and then add a **Layer Mask**. Check your foreground colour is black – press **X** if it's white. Using the **Brush tool**, paint away any pattern from the face and most of the right side. Speed up the process by increasing the brush **Opacity** to around 50%. If you paint away too much, press **X** and paint with white to restore the pattern. Once you're done, open *Texture 4 Music.jpg*. You'll need to hit **Ctrl+A**, **Ctrl+C**, **Ctrl+W**, **Ctrl+V** and add a Layer Mask just as before. You'll notice this pattern is a bit big, so press **Ctrl+T** for **Free Transform**, then drag the corner handles in to resize it.

MAKE TEXTURED PORTRAITS

After

Layering several mysterious textures and patterns over the shot has enhanced the haunting atmosphere of the original image.



3 Add the vignette texture

The music pattern can fill the empty area on the right of the image. Click and drag inside the **Free Transform** box to reposition it. Clicking and dragging outside the box will rotate it. Press **Return** when you're done. Change the Layer's Blending Mode from **Normal** to **Overlay** and paint with black around the edges to fully blend it in. A few clicks in the centre will help to partially fade the texture, making it less distracting and more decorative. Finally, open *Texture 5 Vignette.jpg* which you'll need to Select, Copy and Paste as you did before. This Layer is designed to add some contrast and a slight vignette to the final image. To achieve that, simply change the Layer's Blending Mode from **Normal** to **Vivid Light**.

+ BONUS VIDEO Display your artwork

If you've ever fancied seeing your images hung on the wall of an art gallery then the *Technique of the Month Extra* is for you. You'll discover how to take a flat image and make it look like a canvas wrap before attaching it to a virtual wall. You'll also learn how to add an amazing lighting effect to give the image extra depth and realism.

You can catch the bonus video, which is completely free to watch, on our website. All you have to do is sign up to our *Technique of the Month Extra* mailing list online at www.photoanswers.co.uk/extra. Register now, and every month you'll get a fantastic free video to boost your imaging skills, so you'll never find yourself short of new digital techniques to try.



See how to take this technique a step further by signing up for our free bonus video at www.photoanswers.co.uk/extra

At a glance

You'll learn How to incorporate text into an image and distress its edges

You'll need Photoshop or Elements

Time required 15 minutes
Difficulty level Easy

ADD CUSTOM MESSAGES WITH TEXT EFFECTS



Blend a personalised message into an image using Photoshop's Type tool and creative filters

TECHNIQUE & PICS BY MATTY GRAHAM

On the disc

Video lessons

Watch as Matty runs through this entire technique on your computer screen.

Start image

The image used is called *Cookie.jpg* and it can be found in the Start Images folder.

Even the most cynical among us love to crush open a fortune cookie. There's no better way to finish off a great meal than unravelling the scroll with fevered anticipation to be met with a prediction of your future or an inspiring proverb. But imagine if you could take control and make your own fortune by adding a personalised message. This fun technique will make this idea a reality, and at the same time it will help you explore the potential of the Type tool in Photoshop and Elements.

Adding text to a picture can help you put your own stamp on an image. This often overlooked feature can be used as a simple watermark to protect your image from copyright theft or – as you'll discover in this project – more creatively to bring an image to life. You can try this technique on your own image, but to save you time, we've included our fortune cookie image with a blank space, ready and waiting for you to add your own message. This technique can be achieved in ten minutes so let's get started.

Before

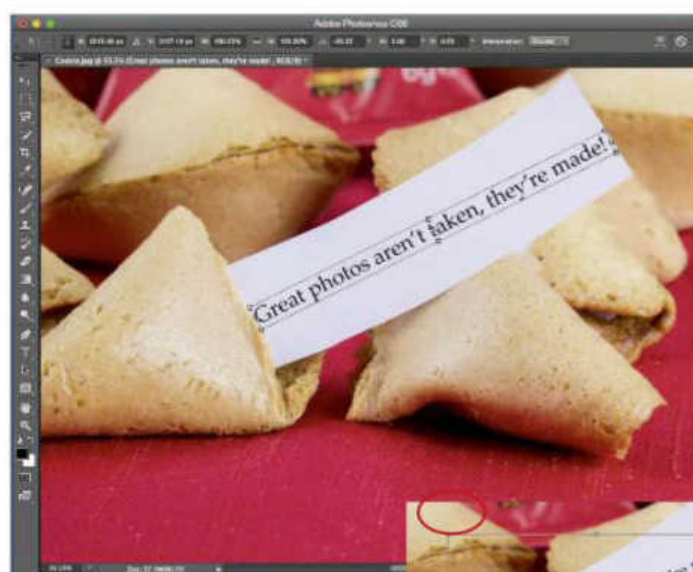


Fortune cookies can be found in supermarkets or from wholesalers, costing around £2 for a bag of ten. Your local Chinese restaurant may also have some to sell. Or use our example shot from the Start Images folder.



1 Open your cookie pic and add your personalised message

In Photoshop or Elements, go to **File→Open** and open *Cookie.jpg* from the Start Images folder. To get a better view of the paper scroll area, hit **Ctrl+Plus** to zoom in. From the Toolbox, find the **Horizontal Type tool**, which is identified by the **T** icon. Drag the mouse over to the paper scroll and click roughly where you want the text to start. Type in your personalised message, then highlight the text by dragging across it and select your chosen font and size in the Tool Options bar. When you're finished, simply click on the **Move tool** in the Toolbox.



2 Move and position your text

It's likely you'll have to manoeuvre the text into line to fit inside the paper scroll area properly. Start by using the **Move tool** to get it roughly into position and then click **Ctrl+T** to enter the **Free Transform mode**. A bounding box will appear around the text. Hover the mouse outside this box and you can click and rotate the text so it fits better with the paper scroll. Once you're happy with the position of the text, hit the **Return** key to apply the changes and exit the **Free Transform mode**.



After

The quirky text adds a personal touch to this fun Photoshop project.

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| 10x32 EL Field Pro | £1,495 |
| 8x54 EL Field Pro | £1,800 |
| 10x54 EL Field Pro | £1,820 |
| 10x50 EL Field Pro | £1,935 |
| 12x50 EL Field Pro | £1,955 |
| 8x42 EL Range WB | £2,195 |
| 10x42 EL Range WB | £2,268 |
| ATX 30 70x95 Spotting Scope | £2,870 |
| ATX 25 60x85 Spotting Scope | £2,600 |
| ATX 25 60x65 Spotting Scope | £2,150 |
| ATX 80 HD Angled + 25 50x scope | £1,999 |
| ATX 65 HD Angled + 25 50x scope | £1,539 |

SIGMA

Nikon/Canon Fit (3 Year warranty)

| | |
|-------------------------|--------|
| 8 16mm f4 5.6 DC | £499 |
| 17 50mm f2.8 DCOS | £279 |
| 10 20mm f3.5 DC | £329 |
| 12 24mm 4.5-5.6 DG MKII | £529 |
| 17 70mm f2.8-4 DC C | £279 |
| 18 35mm f1.8 DC Art | £549 |
| 18 250mm f3.5-6.3 DC | £279 |
| 18 300mm f3.5-6.3 DC C | £349 |
| 24 35mm f2 DG Art | £699 |
| 24 105mm f4 DG Art | £599 |
| 50 500mm f4.5-6.3 DG | £849 |
| 70 200mm f2.8 DG | £729 |
| 150 600mm f5.6-6.3 DG C | £739 |
| 150 600mm f5.6 6.3 DG S | £1,199 |
| 35mm f1.4 DG Art | £599 |
| 50mm f1.4 DG Art | £579 |
| 200mm f1.4 DG Art | £599 |
| 20mm f1.4 DG Art | £629 |
| 105mm f2.8 Macro DG | £1,099 |

3 Legged Thing

| | | | |
|------------|------|-----------|------|
| Roger Evo3 | £279 | PUNKS | |
| Brian Evo3 | £349 | Vyv Evo3 | £129 |
| Jack | £249 | Rick Evo3 | £179 |

INDURO

| | | | |
|-------------------------------------|------|-----------------|------|
| AT113/AT114 | £99 | CT113/CT114 | £219 |
| AT213/AT214 | £118 | CT213/CT214 | £257 |
| AT313 | £149 | CT313/CT314 | £357 |
| AT413 | £175 | CT414 | £429 |
| Short Columns aluminium/carbon from | | | £20 |
| Grand Series Carbon Fibre Tripods: | | | |
| CT203 | £406 | CT404 | £518 |
| CT304 | £449 | CT505 | £824 |
| Grand Turismo Travel Tripod Kits: | | | |
| AGT114 (Alu) | £263 | CGT114 (Carbon) | £395 |
| AGT214 (Alu) | £304 | CGT214 (Carbon) | £458 |

BOWENS

| | | | |
|---|-------|-----------------|-------|
| 1000Pro 2 Head | £1566 | 500R 3 Head Kit | £1437 |
| 750Pro 2 Head | £1253 | 500R 2 Head Kit | £849 |
| 500Pro 2 Head | £1139 | 500C 2 head Kit | £857 |
| See full range of Bowens softboxes, stands and other accessories on our website | | | |

Profoto

| | | | |
|---|--------|-----------------|--------|
| B1 TTL Air Head | £1,632 | B1 2 Head kit | £3,500 |
| Air Remote TTL | £312 | B2 To Go kit | £1,495 |
| B1 Location Kit | £3,060 | B2 Location kit | £1,994 |
| Full list of Accessories available on our website: | | | |
| HR and Rfi Softboxes, umbrellas, reflectors, grids and kits | | | |

USED EQUIPMENT

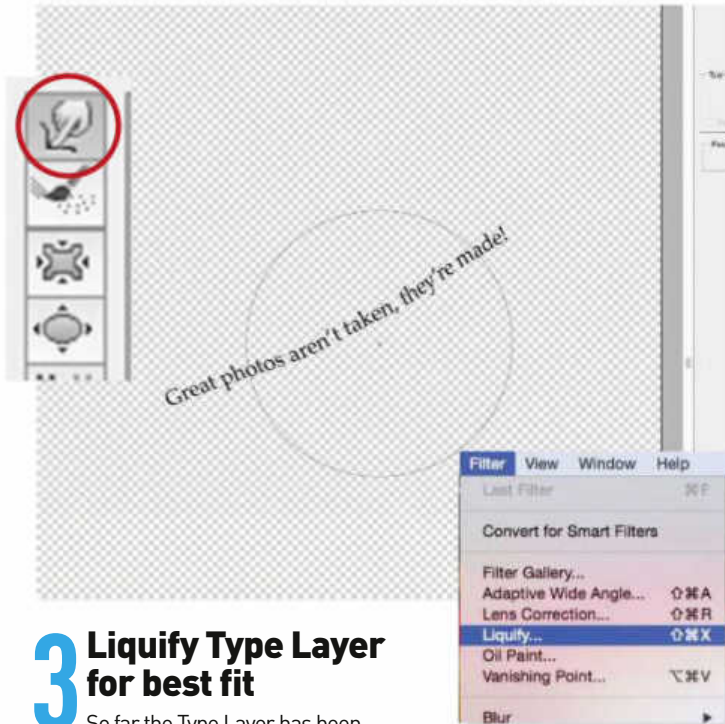
| | |
|---|---------|
| Hasselblad H4D-50 MultiShot + 80mm f2.8 | £27,750 |
| Hasselblad H4D-60 Body set (2700 shots) | £7,995 |
| Hasselblad H3D 391 Body (16500 shots) | £2,995 |
| Hasselblad 35-90mm f4.5-5.6 HCD | £3,295 |
| Hasselblad V HiFi 100 Polaroid Back | £75 |
| Hasselblad 120mm f4 Macro HC | £1,495 |
| Hasselblad V system 16mm Ext Tube | £50 |
| Hasselblad 28mm f4 HCD | £2,250 |
| Hasselblad 28mm f4 HCD | £2,295 |
| Hasselblad V system 45Pfinder finder | £75 |
| Leica S Body | £3,995 |
| Fuji ASK 4000 Printer + media | £795 |
| Leica M-P (240) Black body | £3,695 |
| Leica T 23mm f2.5 Summicron | £795 |
| Leica M Mount 28mm f2.5 (6 bit coded) | £2,150 |
| Leica M Mount 35mm f2.5 (6 bit coded) | £995 |
| Leica X-Vario Black - New | £1,295 |
| Leica X2 + leather Case | £595 |
| Fuji XE1 + 18-55mm | £375 |

| | |
|---|--------|
| Canon EOS 1DX Body (9000 shots) | £2,995 |
| Canon EOS 1D X Mark II | £5,949 |
| Canon EOS SD Mark II body (45000 shots) | £595 |
| Canon EOS SD Mark II body (57000 shots) | £595 |
| Canon EF 70-200mm f4L USM | £295 |
| Canon EF 2x1.4 Extender | £149 |
| Canon EOS 5D body | £295 |
| Canon EF 100mm f2.8 L IS Macro | £495 |
| Canon EF 28-300mm f3.5-5.6 L IS USM | £995 |
| Canon EF 100mm f2.8 L IS USM | £495 |
| Sigma 120-400mm f4.5-5.6 APO - EOS | £395 |
| Canon EF 16-35mm f2.8 L II USM | £695 |
| Canon EF 50mm f1.4 IS USM | £179 |
| Canon EF 85mm f1.2L USM | £695 |
| Canon EF 70-300mm f4.5-5.6 L IS USM | £695 |
| Canon EF 300mm f4L IS USM | £695 |
| Canon EF 400mm f5.6 L USM | £649 |
| Canon EF 24-70mm f2.8 L USM | £595 |
| Canon EF 70-300mm f4L IS USM | £195 |

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| Canon EF 14XIII Extender | £200 |
| Canon EF 100-400mm f4.5-5.6 L IS II | £1450 |
| Canon EF 60mm f2.8 Macro | £199 |
| Zeiss ZE 15mm f2.8 Canon Fit + UV | £1,595 |
| Zeiss 21mm f2.8 Distagon ZE - Canon | £895 |
| Zeiss 50mm f1.4 Planar ZE - Canon | £349 |
| Nikon D800E (12700 shots) | £895 |
| Nikon D4S Body (7000 shots) | £2,995 |
| Nikon D3X Body (22,000 shots) | £1,350 |
| Nikon D800 + Grip (9500 shots) | £949 |
| Nikon D2Xs Body (37,000 shots) | £495 |
| Nikon D600 body (4600 shots) | £495 |
| Nikon D7100 body | £395 |
| Nikon AF-S 80-400mm ED VR | £1,395 |
| Nikon AF-S 600mm f4 G ED VR | £4,495 |
| Nikon AF-S 12-24mm f4G ED DX | £375 |
| Nikon AF-S 80-400mm f4.5-5.6G ED VR | £1,395 |
| Nikon AF-S 300mm f4D IF | £599 |
| Sigma 150-500mm f5.6-6.3 DG OS Nikon | £449 |

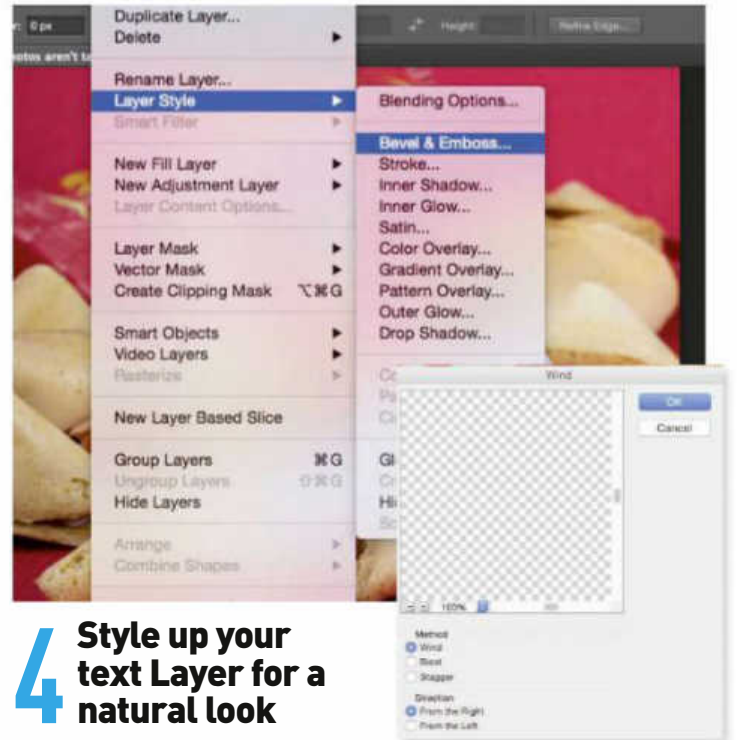
| | |
|-------------------------------------|------|
| Sigma 30mm f1.4 DG Art Lens - Nikon | £495 |
| Nikon AF 20mm f2.8D | £349 |
| Nikon AF-S 60mm Micro 2.8G ED | £295 |
| Nikon AF-D 18-35mm f3.5-4.5D | £195 |
| Nikon AF-S 16-85mm f3.5-5.6G ED VR | £349 |
| Nikon TC-17E II | £175 |
| Nikon 50mm f1.4 AFD | £189 |
| Nikon AF-S 55-200mm f4.5-5.6G DX | £169 |
| Sigma 10-20mm f4.5-5.6 DC Nikon | £195 |
| Bronica PE 125-250mm f5.6 | £150 |
| Samyang 14mm f2.8 ED - Nikon | £225 |
| Zeiss 100mm f2 Macro Planar ZF2 | £799 |
| Fuji X-Pro1 body | £225 |

Check out the website for the most up to date listings of second hand equipment



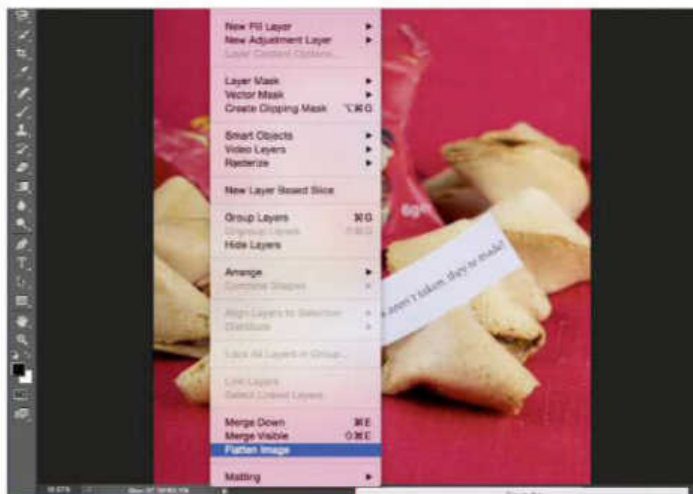
3 Liquify Type Layer for best fit

So far the Type Layer has been repositioned, but at the moment it's still on a horizontal baseline. As the paper scroll has a slight curve, this can be recreated with the text. In Photoshop, go to **Filter→Liquify** (in Elements go to **Filter→Distort→Liquify**). Click **OK** when the **Rasterize** or **Simplify** warning pops up, and when the dialogue box appears, select the **Forward Warp** tool. Use a **Brush Size** of **250px** and then click and drag the text until it bows to match the paper scroll. Once you're happy with the Liquify changes, hit **OK** to apply the filter and the dialogue box will disappear.



4 Style up your text Layer for a natural look

The printed text on a fortune cookie scroll has a faded, imperfect finish to it and this can be recreated on your Type Layer for a more distressed appearance. Go to **Layer→Layer Style** (**Layer→Layer Style→Style Settings** if you are using Elements) and when the option box appears, click on **Bevel** before selecting **OK**. To add to the effect on the text, go to **Filter→Stylize→Wind** and in the **Direction** option, select **From the Right**. Repeat the Wind step again, but this time change the direction to **From the Left**.

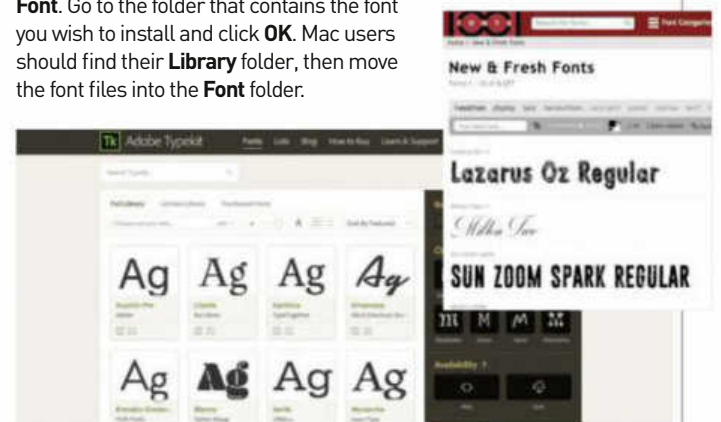


5 Darken text then flatten Layers and save file

By doubling up on the Wind filter, the result can leave the text looking too washed out. If the text on your image looks too faint, duplicate the Layer (**Ctrl+J**) and this will darken the text up again while retaining the pitted edges on the either side of the letters created by the Wind filter. You can now flatten all the Layers you have created **Layer→Flatten Image** and save the file (**File→Save As...**) as a JPEG or your chosen file format.

+ TIP Expand your font options

If you can't find the ideal font for your message, there's a number of ways you can source alternatives to make your text come alive. If you are using Photoshop CC on Adobe's Creative Cloud plan, you will have access to TypeKit, which is accessed via the CC Assets tab. An alternative is to install free fonts onto your computer. These are mostly created by graphic design enthusiasts and uploaded to the internet for use. There's plenty of websites offering free fonts, and most offer a simple, one-click download option. Just type 'free fonts' into a search engine to discover them. With your font file downloaded, go to the **Fonts** window (on your PC, not in Photoshop) and select **Install New Font**. Go to the folder that contains the font you wish to install and click **OK**. Mac users should find their **Library** folder, then move the font files into the **Font** folder.



By installing additional fonts, you will expand your creative options when it comes to using text with your images in Photoshop.

CREATE MONO MAGIC WITH LIGHTROOM



Discover the quick and easy way to transform your RAW files into black & white modern masterpieces

TECHNIQUE & PICS BY BEN DAVIS

At a glance

You'll learn How to make a powerful mono conversion, using the tools on offer to take control of the tones and contrast

You'll need Lightroom 5/CC or Photoshop CS6/CC

Time required 15 minutes

Difficulty level Medium

On the disc

Video lessons Watch as Ben runs through this must-learn Lightroom technique on your computer screen.

Start images Try out the project using the *Wild horse.dng* RAW file. The picture can be found in the Start Images folder.

A fantastic black & white image makes use of tones, texture, contrast and drama. This cocktail of ingredients combines to give a timeless and evocative finish to a pic.

Achieving the classic mono look is easy when you shoot in RAW and process your pics in Lightroom or Photoshop's Adobe Camera Raw. Both software packages offer all the tools you need to fine-tune the contrast and sculpt the tones to get highly creative with your processing.

This tutorial will show you how to create your own mono magic in eight simple steps. We'll also help you make the most of the Adjustment Brush and Graduated Filter to make localised alterations, giving you total control of the finished image.

Before



This photograph of a wild horse was captured in the sand dunes of Luskentyre Beach, on the Isle of Harris in the Outer Hebrides. The original shot has a simple composition, but the tones are rather muted and it lacks a sense of drama and impact.

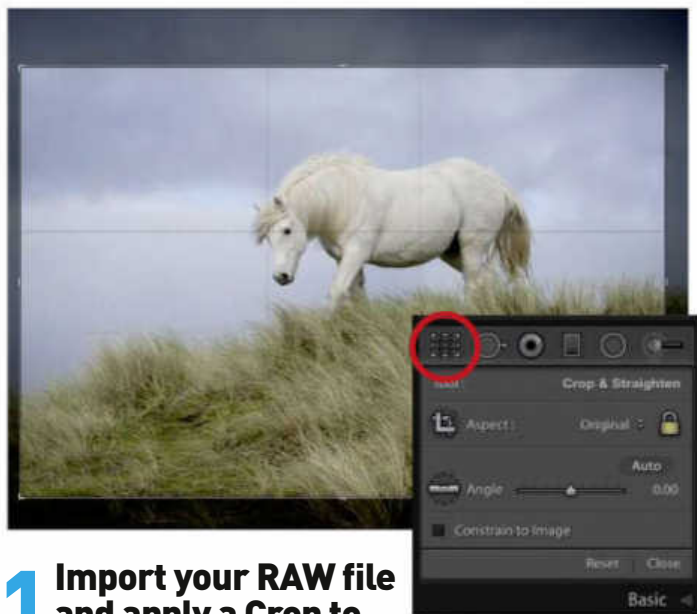
BEN DAVIS





After

The mono conversion has boosted the textures and created a brooding sky to make the shot far more stylish. ►



1 Import your RAW file and apply a Crop to reframe the composition of the image

To start off, you need to import your own RAW file into the Lightroom Library, or use **Wild horse.dng** from the **Start Images** folder. To do this go to **File** → **Import** to access the Import controls. Navigate to where your file is located, select it by ticking the box in the thumbnail corner, and then click **Import** at the bottom right of the interface. Once it's in, click on **Develop** to enter the editing module. Select the **Crop Overlay tool** from the Toolbar (press **R** for a shortcut), and make sure **Aspect** is set to **Original** to maintain the same frame dimensions. Click and drag the corner handles on the Crop Overlay tool to adjust the size of the bounding box until you're happy with the composition. Try and line up a key point of interest – such as the horse's eye – near one of the intersecting thirds lines. Hit **Done** to exit the tool.



2 Convert to mono and adjust the tones

Open the **Basic** tab, and under **Presence** pull the **Saturation** slider to **-100** to make an instant mono conversion. Push the **Exposure** to **+0.20** and boost the **Contrast** to a maximum of **+100**. To reveal extra detail, set the **Highlights** slider to **-100** and drag **Shadows** to **+100**. Set the **Whites** slider to **-30** and the **Blacks** slider to **-50**, and then enhance the texture within the image by pushing the **Clarity** slider to **+100**.



3 Adjust the Tone Curve to fine-tune the contrast

Open the **Tone Curve** tab, and click the icon to manually edit the **Point Curve**. Make sure **Channel** is set to **RGB**, and add an S-curve by clicking and pulling the line down at the first quarter intersection to add weight to the shadows. Boost the lighter tones by gently pushing the Point Curve up at the upper quarter intersection. Click and pull up the beginning of the Point Curve, to lift the Black point of the image.



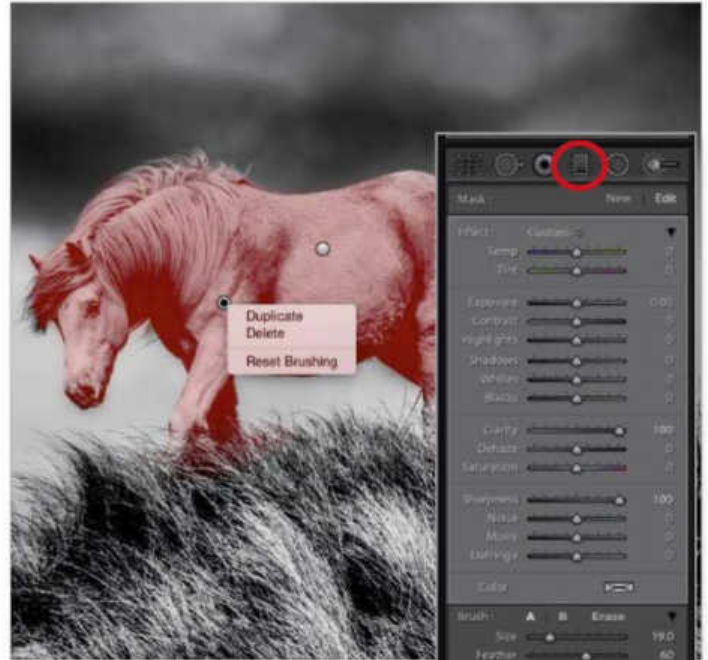
4 Use the Graduated Filter to boost detail and inject drama

Select the **Graduated filter** from the Toolbar (press **M**), and double-click **Effect** to clear any previous settings. Set **Exposure** to **-0.80**, **Highlights** to **-50** and **Shadows** to **50** then click and drag the filter over the sky, with a wide feather area to soften the edge of the effect. Click **New** and double-click **Effect** once more to clear the settings. Push **Clarity** to **100**, and pull a Graduated filter up over the bottom of the frame to add extra detail and texture to the grass. Click **Done** to exit.



5 Dodge and Burn to add local contrast to the pic

Click on the **Adjustment Brush (K)** in the Toolbar and from the drop-down **Effect** menu select **Burn (Darken)**. Below in the **Brush** controls, set **Feather** to **60**, **Flow** to **100**, **Density** to **100** and untick **Auto Mask**. Adjust the **Size** of the brush with the slider or the scroll-wheel on your mouse. Paint over the darker areas of the frame, like the sky, and the shadows on the horse and grass. Press **O** to see an Overlay Mask of the areas affected. To tidy up any edges, hold **Alt** on the keyboard to access the **Erase** brush and paint over the areas to be deleted. Click **New** and from the **Effect** menu choose **Dodge (Lighten)**. Now paint over areas you want to brighten – such as the horse's body and the lighter patches of grass. Hold **Alt** again to access the **Erase** brush to tidy up any areas where the effect has spilt over the edges.



6 Use the Adjustment Brush to boost detail

With the **Adjustment Brush** still selected, double-click **Effect** to reset the sliders to neutral. Push **Clarity** to **100** and **Sharpness** to **100**, and paint the brush over the entire horse. Press **O** to toggle the Overlay Mask on and off. Hold **Alt** to access the **Erase** brush, and with **Auto Mask** ticked, delete any areas which extend beyond the edges of the horse. **Right-click** on the Pin and select **Duplicate** to double the strength of the effect. To exit the tool, click **Done**.



7 Control Noise and Sharpening in the Detail tab

In the **Detail** control panel, drag inside the preview window until you can see the horse's eye. Under **Sharpening**, set **Amount** to **80**, leave **Radius** at **1.0** but push up **Detail** to **45**. Hold down **Alt** as you adjust the **Masking** slider to see a preview of which areas will be sharpened (the white areas) and which won't (the black). Adjust the slider so that only the stronger edges are visible. For this image, that's **50**. Under **Noise Reduction**, set **Luminance** to **10** to smooth out some of the grain present in the image.



8 Add a vignette and Export

Open the **Effects** tab and under **Post-Crop Vignetting**, set **Amount** to **-15**, **Roundness** to **-50**, **Feather** to **100** and **Highlights** to **100**. This will darken the edges of the frame, which focuses the viewer's attention on the subject. To finish, you need to Export your file, so go to **File→Export...** Begin by setting the **Export To** field to **Specific folder** and then selecting a location. Usually the **Desktop** is easiest. Select a **Custom Name** in **File Naming** so it's easy to identify. Under **File Settings**, set **Image Format** to **JPEG** and reduce **Quality** to around **80**. Finally, click **Export**.

YOUR PICTURES

Get some friendly, constructive advice from our experts! We pay for every pic published, so send your best shots to dpimages@bauermedia.co.uk



YOUR EXPERTS

Digital Photo's technical editor **Matt** and assistant editor **Matty** are on hand to help with insightful shooting and editing tips. To have your work shown and assessed in Your Pictures, email a selection of no more than five images to the address on the left, and put **Your Pictures** in the subject box.

Morning light by Graham Travis

What was used

Camera Canon 6D & 16-35mm lens Exposure 1/160secs @ f/11, ISO 400 Software Lightroom 6



This shot was taken in the Lake District near Whinlatter Forest. My wife spotted the fantastic shafts of light illuminating the shadowy forest. I moved around to get a vantage point that shielded the bright centre of the sun behind the trees, but still showed the shafts of light.

● **Matty says** The Lake District is a fantastic location to visit and one sure to return shots full of atmosphere. I'm pleased Graham explored further than the usual postcard locations, as it's delivered this great opportunity. At any other time of the day, this would have been a simple snapshot of the forest, but with the directional light bursting through the trees, the scene takes on a whole new dimension. The shafts of light act as lead-in lines and draw the viewer's eye towards the sun. In this respect, I think it'd be better for Graham to place the sun centrally for a symmetrical feel, rather than slightly off-centre. This is easy to try by using the Crop tool in Photoshop or Elements. What'll need a little more attention is the exposure levels in the image. With such a strong light source in the picture, the camera is always going to struggle to return a

balanced exposure that retains detail in the darker areas. This is because all cameras have a limited dynamic range that's much lower than the light-to-dark zone in which the human eye can discern detail. Photoshop's Shadows/Highlights command allows you to

"I'M PLEASED GRAHAM EXPLORED FURTHER THAN THE USUAL POSTCARD LOCATIONS"



After

Cropping to a symmetrical format and boosting the colours makes Graham's image even more inviting.

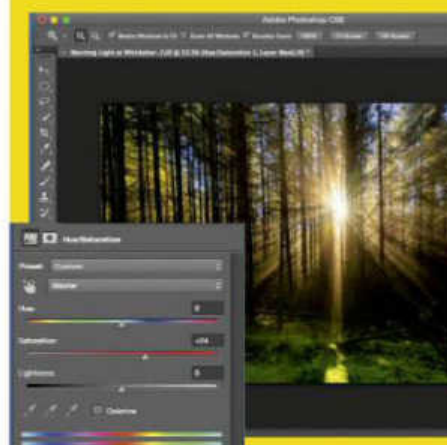


control how the dark and bright tones appear with two sliders. It's best to avoid pushing these too far though, because the results will look unnatural.

With the exposure evened up, the image could be further polished by boosting the colours. Doing this will not only make more of the attractive orange sunrays, but will also enhance the blue in the sky and the green foliage in the lower third. A simple Hue/Saturation Adjustment Layer will allow you to give the colours an extra kick (see the panel on the right for more on this).

Overall, Graham should be proud of this image as it shows the difference the right light can make to an unusual location.

EXPERT ADVICE Increase Saturation in seconds



Boosting the colours in your image can add extra zest. The simplest way of doing this in Photoshop or Elements is to add a Hue/Saturation Adjustment Layer, which will enable you to increase or reduce the intensity of your colours.

In the **Layers** panel, click on the **Create New Fill or Adjustment Layer** icon (a half black, half white circle). Select **Hue/Saturation** from the dropdown list that appears, and in the palette, drag the **Saturation** slider to the right.

Adjustment Layers have Layer Masks attached. If you paint with a black brush, you can hide the parts of the colour boost you don't want to see, giving you precise control over where the extra saturation is applied.

After

Tightening up the shot helps the composition, but the dark shadow over the face is a problem that can only be solved at the time of shooting.



London busker

by Christian Cross

What was used

Camera Fujifilm X-T1 & 35mm lens

Exposure 1/100secs @ f/2, ISO 1000 Software Photoshop



I captured this image on London's South Bank while walking with my fiancée. My small Fujifilm camera is perfect for street photography, and I was able to shoot the busker as he played to the passers-by.

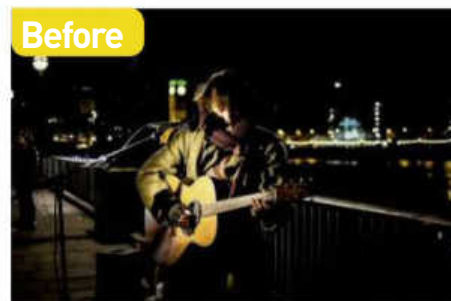
● **Matty says** It takes a bold approach and a good deal of confidence to take street shots featuring people you don't know. This makes street photography a tough skill to master, as it's a form of photography that's as dependent on your approach as it is on your skills with a camera. Completely at the mercy of location, light and unpredictable subjects, street shooters have to take their chances as and when they present themselves. Here, Christian had already stacked the odds in his

favour by having his small and discreet camera at the ready. Using a prime lens with a large f/2 aperture helped him tackle the low-light conditions and achieve a fast-enough shutter speed to avoid blurring his subject. The shallow depth-of-field has additional benefits, creating beautiful bokeh from the lights in the background.

So, there's a lot going for this image, but there's a few tweaks that can make it stronger. Although Big Ben looks great, there are a lot of lights in the background. By using the Clone tool to remove some of them, the viewer's eye won't be distracted from the key subject. Losing some of the right hand side of

"STREET SHOOTERS HAVE TO TAKE THEIR CHANCES AS AND WHEN THEY'RE PRESENTED"

Before



the image with the Crop tool will also balance the frame better by giving the subject 'room to move into'. But the main issue here is the shadow of the mic across his face. This is very tough to fix in post-processing, so needs to be addressed at the time of capture. Working on timing to pick a moment when the subject is free from shadow is the solution. Alternatively, there are no rules in street photography that say you can't talk and interact with your subject. A quick chat at the end of a song would probably see the singer oblige in moving out of the shadow for a shot – especially with a small contribution to his busker's hat!

Donna Nook seal

by Andrew Wright

What was used

Camera Nikon D300 & 55-300mm lens

Exposure 1/160sec @ f/5.6, ISO 100 Software Lightroom 6



The photo of the seal was taken at Donna Nook seal sanctuary.

I had been shooting for about an hour and was just leaving when the seal pup started crying and moving up towards me over the dunes. I managed to catch the pup just as it pushed its way through the grass. I edited the photo in Lightroom, increasing the Clarity for extra definition.

● **Matt says** Wow! This is a fantastic pic and proof that if you put the hours in, the great shots will come. Andrew has done well to capture the seal as it was pushing through the dune grass as this instantly conveys the environmental context. The grass blades could have proved distracting, but Andrew's angle and timing means the key focal point – the seal's eye – is unobstructed.

One area of the image that could be improved though, is the composition. Andrew's original shot places the subject bang in the centre of the frame, and unless your scene is symmetrical, this leads to weaker pics. It's easy to do – especially if you're using

the central AF point to focus – but recomposing after locking focus (or cropping the image later) will give stronger results. Like the busker on the left, a subject moving or looking in a particular direction needs more space ahead of them than behind if you're to achieve a harmonious balance. The Crop tool, found in both Photoshop and Elements, makes recomposing an image easy. By drawing out a new bounding box, you can crop out areas that don't add anything to the image, or can rearrange how space is used around the subject. In my version, I've created some active space ahead of its gaze, but still left enough dune grass to keep the feel of the pup's natural setting.

The other thing I'd be tempted to alter is the colour balance. It's quite cool in the original, but warmth can quickly be added with the Photo Filter (see panel). But on the whole, these are minor points, and don't alter the fact that this is a great image well worthy of praise.

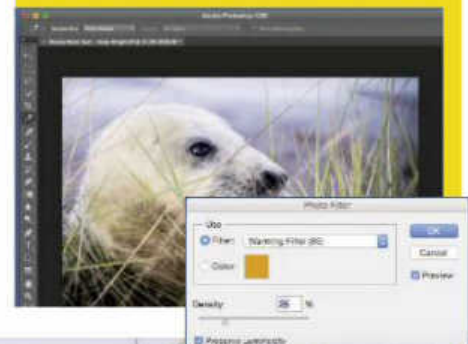
“IN WILDLIFE PHOTOGRAPHY, IF YOU PUT THE HOURS IN, GREAT SHOTS WILL COME”

EXPERT ADVICE Warm up frames

Before



The Photo Filter is found in both Photoshop and Elements and is a quick way to correct or create colour casts in your image. Head to **Image→Adjustments→Photo Filter** (**Filter→Adjustments→Photo Filter** if you are using Elements) and a dialogue box will appear with a dropdown list of filter presets and a **Color** option to select the colour manually. There's also a **Density** slider that increases the effect of the filter.



After

Creating active space ahead of the subject enhances the framing of this superb shot.



YOUR PICTURES

Before



Granddad

by Finn Comer

What was used

Camera Nikon D3100 & 18-55mm lens
Exposure 1/125sec @ f/8, ISO 200 Software Elements

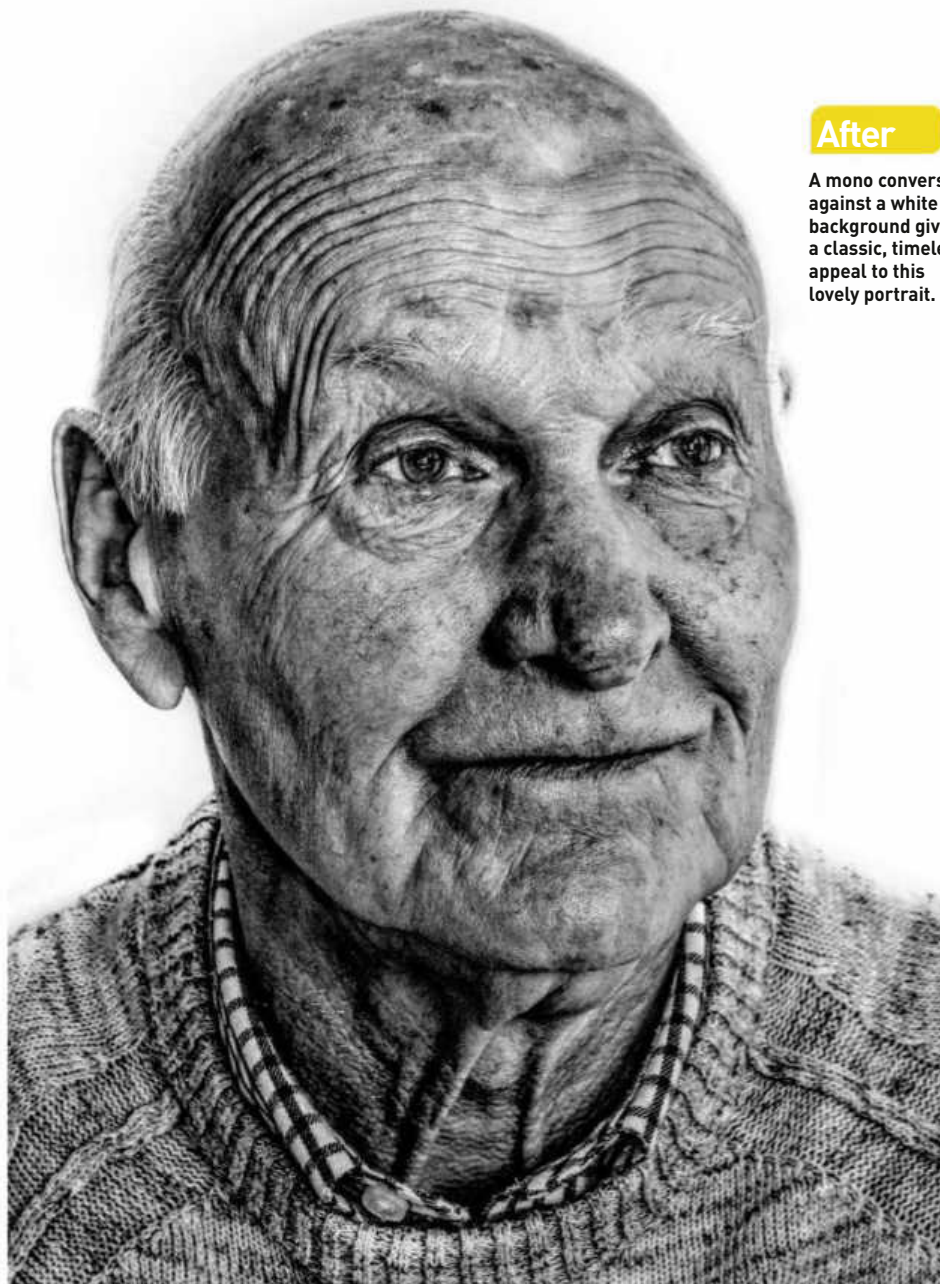


I took this photo of my granddad in front of a white backdrop. In order to get the lighting that I desired, I used an off-camera

flashgun that I bounced in from the side. The photo had just been sitting amongst my files, but when I saw that *Digital Photo* were offering a free Photomatix plug-in, I thought the portrait might work quite well in HDR. I only had the one exposure so, as the image was in RAW, I created three images at different exposures to merge together.

● **Matt says** Some portraits reveal more than others in the way they are lit and processed, and also in the expression from the subject. I find Finn's portrait compelling and it makes me think his granddad must have some great tales to tell. While it's great to see Finn has gone to the effort of using off-camera flash to bring a more professional lighting style to the image, the HDR processing has proved to be a double-edged sword. On the one hand, it has revealed more texture in his subject's face, but this has come at a cost, as the shadows created by Finn's flashgun are more evident following the HDR treatment. To solve this issue and add a classic, timeless styling to the pic, a mono conversion might prove fruitful. There

"THE PHOTOMATIX EFFECT FINN ADDED HAS PROVED TO BE A DOUBLE-EDGED SWORD"



After

A mono conversion against a white background gives a classic, timeless appeal to this lovely portrait.

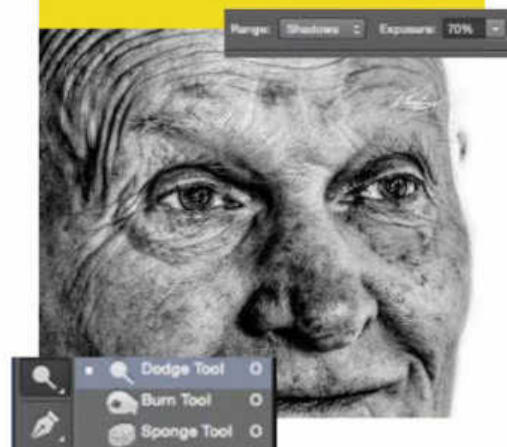
are many ways to turn an image to black & white (the quickest of which is to hit **Ctrl+Shift+U**), but regardless of which method you use, it's highly likely that an additional boost in contrast will be needed. This can be added with a Brightness/Contrast Adjustment Layer, which is available in both Photoshop and Elements.

To whiten the background and remove the halo, another Adjustment Layer is needed – this time it's **Levels**. When the palette appears, simply drag the **Highlights** slider to the left until the background turns white. This will overexpose some of the subject, but because it's an Adjustment Layer, you can use a **Brush** set to black to restore the detail in the face. The last step is to brighten the main focal point – the eyes. This can be achieved using the Dodge tool (see panel).

Finn should be proud of his shot as it's a great portrait. The HDR effect emphasises the textures and tones, and suits the subject perfectly. It's a great use of Photomatix HDR software. One for the family album!

EXPERT ADVICE Dodge to reveal detail

The **Dodge tool** is found in the Toolbox in both Photoshop and Elements and works by lightening tones. You can choose to brighten the Shadows, Midtones or Highlights and also adjust the strength of the effect with the **Exposure** slider. Found next to the Dodge tool is the **Burn tool** and this has the opposite effect, darkening areas of the image.



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JON ADAMS For shooting and Photoshop queries, Jon is on hand to help solve any problems you have.



MATT HIGGS With his in-depth knowledge of all the latest gear, Tech Ed Matt can advise on all aspects of camera kit.



MATTY GRAHAM Assistant Editor Matty is never seen without his DSLR, and is brimming with shooting tips.



ANDY HEATHER Andy worked as a commercial photographer in Japan, and is overflowing with advice.



DSLR SKILLS

Can I shoot HDR without auto-exposure bracketing?

I've been trying to shoot some HDR sequences for use with the Photomatrix software that came free with *Digital Photo*, but my D3300 doesn't have an auto-exposure bracketing function. Is it still possible to capture a similar set of images, as I'd love to start creating some HDR pics?

David Spencer

● **Jon says** Auto-exposure bracketing (AEB) is a useful feature that captures a sequence of images at different exposure settings. In a three-shot bracket, one shot will be darker

than normal, one shot will be at the regular exposure setting, and one will be brighter than normal. How dark or bright the under and overexposed shots are depends on how the AEB is set up, but for HDR, most people use a 2-stop difference. As you say, the D3300 doesn't have an AEB option built-in, but you'll be pleased to discover that bracketed sequences can still be created using the Exposure Compensation function, or by dialling in the settings you want using the camera's Manual exposure mode.

Before beginning to select your settings, it's

a good idea to frame up your shot and lock the camera in place on a tripod when shooting HDR. This will ensure that your camera doesn't move at all between exposures, helping produce seamless results during your post-processing later on. It's also a smart move to use the camera's Self-timer or a remote shutter release. This will avoid any blurry camera shake in your photos created when you press the shutter.

Here's how to capture a three-shot bracket on a D3300 (or any other DSLR) using Exposure Compensation...



How to use Exposure Compensation to capture a bracketed series of shots



1 Choose settings, focus and take your first bracketed image

Choose Aperture Priority on the camera's main mode dial, frame up your scene, and focus as normal. Once you're happy with the focus, switch the camera to its Manual Focus mode. This will prevent it from refocusing and adjusting the selected focus distance as you take each following image. Use the default Matrix metering option, and select the aperture you want to use (eg. f/11). Check your shutter speed in the viewfinder, hold down the Exposure Compensation button and dial in -2.0. You'll notice the shutter speed has increased to a much faster setting. This means that less light will hit the sensor, resulting in a darker picture. Press the shutter home to capture your first shot.





A set of images suitable for HDR processing can be shot on any camera with Exposure Compensation or a Manual shooting mode.

2 Turn off Exposure Compensation for an evenly metered photo

Hold down the Exposure Compensation button again, and dial in a setting of 0.0. This has switched the Exposure Compensation function off. You'll see the shutter speed has returned to its original setting. Without changing anything else, press the shutter all the way down to take your second shot. This will be your middle exposure, as automatically metered by the camera. It's the setting you use for all your normal shots, so there's nothing special about it! It will however form the middle of the brightness range in the HDR image that you later produce using all three shots. Press the playback button and switch between your images to ensure that the camera remained static for both shots.



3 Increase exposure brightness for the final shot in the set

Now hold down the Exposure Compensation button once more, and dial in a new setting of +2.0. With this setting you're adding light to the exposure, and you'll see the shutter speed has become considerably longer. Nothing else needs to be changed, as your focus point and aperture value will remain just as they were for the last two pictures. Press the shutter down for a third time, and you'll take a very bright, overexposed shot. You now have a full -2, 0, +2 bracketed set of photos that will be perfect for creating an HDR image. With a little familiarity and practice, this Exposure Compensation technique takes only a little longer than using the AEB function, and is just as effective.

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KNOW-HOW

What do the different metering modes do?

Q My D7200 has three different lightmeters built in, and I'm never sure which one I'm supposed to use. I've tried taking the same shot using all three, and sometimes the results are identical, while other times they vary wildly. What's the difference between them?

Jacob Stones

● **Matty says** A camera records the light being reflected off a scene, and Nikon DSLRs have three different ways of measuring it. These measurements are then used to select the exposure settings needed to capture a well exposed photo that's neither too bright, nor too dark. The most common metering mode is Matrix. This measures the light from all over the scene and makes a calculated guess at what's needed to deliver an even exposure. It's not infallible though, as the camera can't 'see' and doesn't know how you want your shot to look. But for most users, Matrix metering is the default setting.

The next most useful mode is Spot metering. This measures a very small part of the scene – usually determined by the active AF point – and selects exposure settings based on that area being a midtone. By targeting the Spotmeter at a midtone that's in the same light as your subject, you'll get an accurate exposure. This is useful for when you have tricky lighting conditions that would fool the Matrix mode



into underexposing or overexposing the shot. Subjects that are backlit, or brighter/darker than normal will often require Spot metering if you want to get the exposure right first time.

The third mode is Centre-weighted metering. This is a rather old fashioned mode that biases the measurement towards the middle of the frame. The idea is that the exposure settings aren't unduly influenced by what's happening around the frame edges. It's neither as precise as Spot metering nor as smart as Matrix, but it's a traditional way of metering that many photographers used in the film days, and is still maintained as an option.

What is a flash Guide Number?

Q The pop-up flash on my D3300 has a GN of 12. This varies to my external flashgun which has a GN of 36, but I'm not sure what it actually means. Can your experts explain?

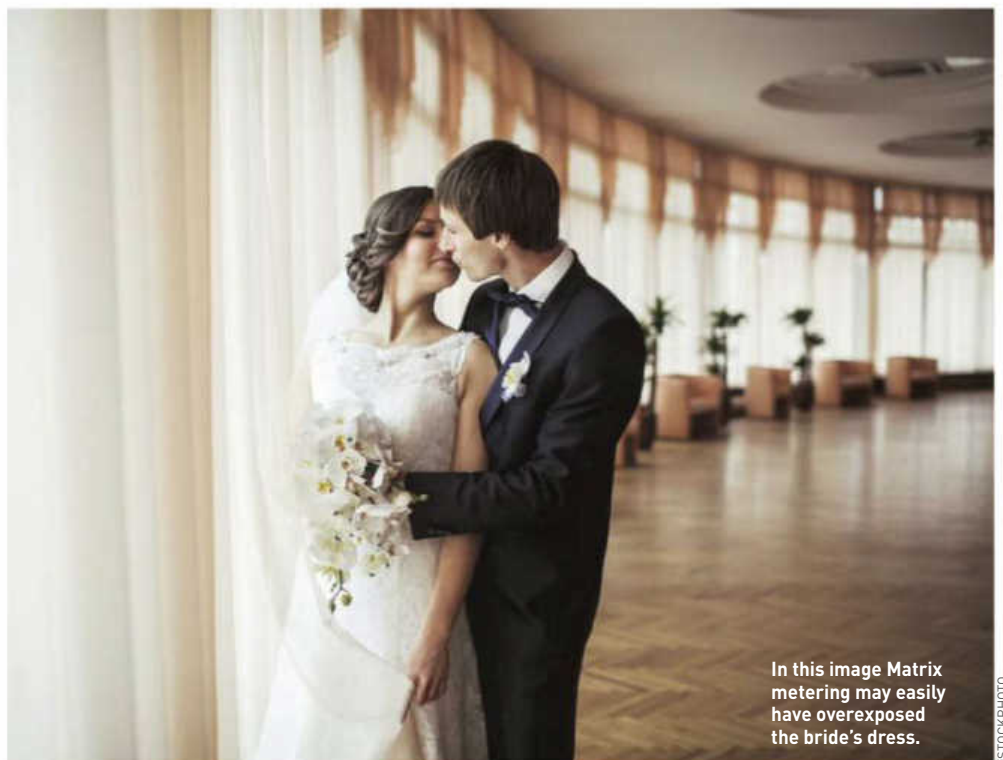
Jake Goodsell

● **Matt says** GN stands for Guide Number and is an expression of the output power of the flash. It's important that the unit of distance and the ISO sensitivity is mentioned alongside the GN, otherwise it's impossible to make use of it. The flash on a D3300 is GN 12 (metres, ISO 100), and this means it will illuminate a subject 12m away at an aperture of f/1 when the sensitivity is set to ISO 100. Now there aren't many f/1 lenses around, so you have to divide the GN by the aperture used to establish the working range of the flash. With a lens set to f/4, this flash will be powerful enough to light someone standing 3m away.

Expert advice Discover
Nikon's Highlight-Weighted metering

Several of the newer Nikon DSLRs, including the D750 and D810, feature an additional metering mode called Highlight-Weighted metering. When set to this option the camera will monitor the highlights of a scene, and place priority on them, ensuring they're not overexposed. This is highly useful when shooting bright subjects that are moving – a situation where accurate spot metering would be difficult. It's also good for subjects lit by coloured or spot lighting, conditions that could confuse the Matrix mode. Failure to expose correctly for these brighter areas would normally have resulted in them suffering from 'clipping', a rendering of them as pure white in the image file, and a total loss of any detail.

For wedding and performance photographers who are often responding to quickly changing scenes and lighting conditions, it's a welcome addition. It has the potential to ensure more exposure hits, and fewer misses, from even the trickiest of shoots.



In this image Matrix metering may easily have overexposed the bride's dress.

ISTOCKPHOTO

Set to its Rear Sync mode, a flash will fire at the end of a longer exposure.



SUPERSTOCK / ALAMY

FLASH ADVICE

What are Slow and Rear flash modes?

Q I have a Nikon D5500, and am intrigued to know what the different flash modes do – especially the Slow and Rear settings. I’ve tried them, but got rather weird results?

James Millman

● **Matt says** There are a number of different flash modes on Nikon DSLRs, and the Slow and Rear Sync settings can be used when you want to combine a flash with a longer

exposure. When doing this, the long exposure records the ambient light in the scene, while the burst of flash illuminates the subject (providing it is close enough to be in range).

The most common reason to use Slow or Rear Sync is when taking a portrait shot at night, a situation where you want to light your subject and reveal detail in the dark background at the same time. If you use the regular flash mode, you’ll only light the subject and will leave the background in the

gloom. If you take a long exposure, you’ll get a more balanced scene, but will have a poorly lit, blurred subject. The Slow and Rear Sync modes address this to give better balanced shots. The difference between them is that the Slow setting fires the flash at the beginning of the long exposure, whereas the Rear setting fires it at the end, just before the shutter closes. With either you’ll need to use a tripod, or camera shake will cause the long-exposure element to be blurred.

Expert advice Go off-camera with Nikon’s Wireless Lighting system

If you’re looking to start experimenting with creative lighting, then one of the first things you’ll want to do is go off-camera with your flash. But did you know that many of Nikon’s cameras and flashguns have a basic wireless feature built-in for this very purpose? Called the Nikon Advanced Wireless

Lighting system, it uses small light pulses from a pop-up or hotshoe mounted flash to communicate with an external flashgun. This then sends back exposure readings to the camera before an exposure is made and the flash fired. TTL, unit grouping and even remote power control can be used with

compatible models. While not as advanced as some external radio triggers, it does allow Nikon users remote control of flashguns from up to 10m away, without having to buy extra accessories. You can find more information and a full list of devices that can be used as part of the system at: bit.ly/Nikonwireless



LENS TYPES

Can I use DX lenses on my full-frame Nikon?

Q I've been a Nikon user for years and have finally invested in my first full-frame camera – a D750. I've built up quite a collection of DX lenses that I used with my D7000, but I wondered if they're completely useless now that I've upgraded to a model with a larger sensor?

Lucy Atherton

● **Matty says** The D750 has a full-frame sensor, so is optimized for use with full-frame or FX lenses. DX lenses are designed for Nikon APS-C cameras with smaller sensors like the D7200, D5500 or

D3300, but you can still use them on full-frame models.

When you mount a DX lens on a D750, you'll see an additional, smaller frame in the viewfinder. This is the cropped view that a DX lens will produce, and pics you take will only record this area. When shooting with a DX lens, your D750's 24.2Mp resolution will be reduced to 10.3Mp to reflect the smaller area of the sensor that's in use. Instead of getting an image file that measures 6016x4016px, you'll get pics that are instead 3936x2624px in size. This will still give you good quality images, but obviously you're not

making the most of the camera's entire resolution.

The trickiest thing about shooting with DX lenses on FX cameras is remembering to frame up with the smaller square. Even with the crop rectangle quite visible in the viewfinder, it's still easy for your brain to ignore it, particularly if you're shooting quickly or are caught up capturing an exciting moment. You might get used to this when shooting exclusively with DX lenses on a day out, but switching between FX and DX lenses on a shoot will often result in a few composition accidents!

How should I set up my stops?

Q My D200 allows me to choose between 1, 1/2 or 1/3 stop exposure value changes. What's the best setting to use for general photography?

Karen Lavalier

● **Jon says** A full 'stop' (or 1-stop) is a halving or doubling of the light hitting the sensor. This can be adjusted by opening or closing the aperture of a lens, or increasing or decreasing the length of an exposure. To allow more precise changes to be made, Nikon DSLRs can be set to offer 1/2 or 1/3 stop increments. This means you can divide your aperture settings or shutter times into halves or thirds, depending on how accurate you want to be.

Because 1/3 offers the most subtle adjustment, it makes sense to set your camera to it. To do this, go to Metering/Exposure in the Custom settings menu, and change EV Step to 1/3. This will give you three options within each full stop for both shutter speed times and aperture.

KNOW-HOW

What is an X-sync speed?

Q I was playing with my D5300, running through the menus and settings, and while in Manual exposure mode, I came across X200 in the shutter speeds. What is this setting for?

Francis Hudson

● **Matt says** The X shutter speed setting indicates the maximum flash synchronisation speed of the camera. This is the

fastest shutter speed you can safely set when using a regular flashgun or studio flash system. If you set a shutter speed any faster than this, you'll get a black band appear through your images, as the shutter curtain won't have time to clear the frame when the image is being captured.

When using flash, you can set a slower shutter speed than the X setting indicated, but you

need to ensure that you don't set a faster one. Different camera models have different maximum sync speeds; you'll find yours listed in the manual. Generally though this will be between 1/160sec and 1/250sec on a DSLR. If you're unsure about your camera's maximum sync speed, take a few test shots at decreasing shutter speeds until any black banding has disappeared.

Next month
Your Canon
problems solved

In the next of our Photo Answers specials, we collate all your Canon conundrums and provide the solutions to your EOS-based enquiries! If you have a pressing question about Canon camera kit or need some sound advice on shooting or imaging technique, email it through to us at dp@bauermedia.co.uk

Put PhotoAnswers – Canon in the subject box, and we'll do our best to get you back on track.



A mysterious black band appearing across the image on pics taken with flash is a result of the shutter curtain blocking part of your sensor during the exposure. It's caused by setting too fast a shutter speed, and a slower shutter speed will eliminate its presence.

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Digital Photo magazine is published 13 times a year by Bauer Consumer Media Ltd, 1 Lincoln Court, Lincoln Road, Peterborough, PE1 2RF. Registered number 01176085.

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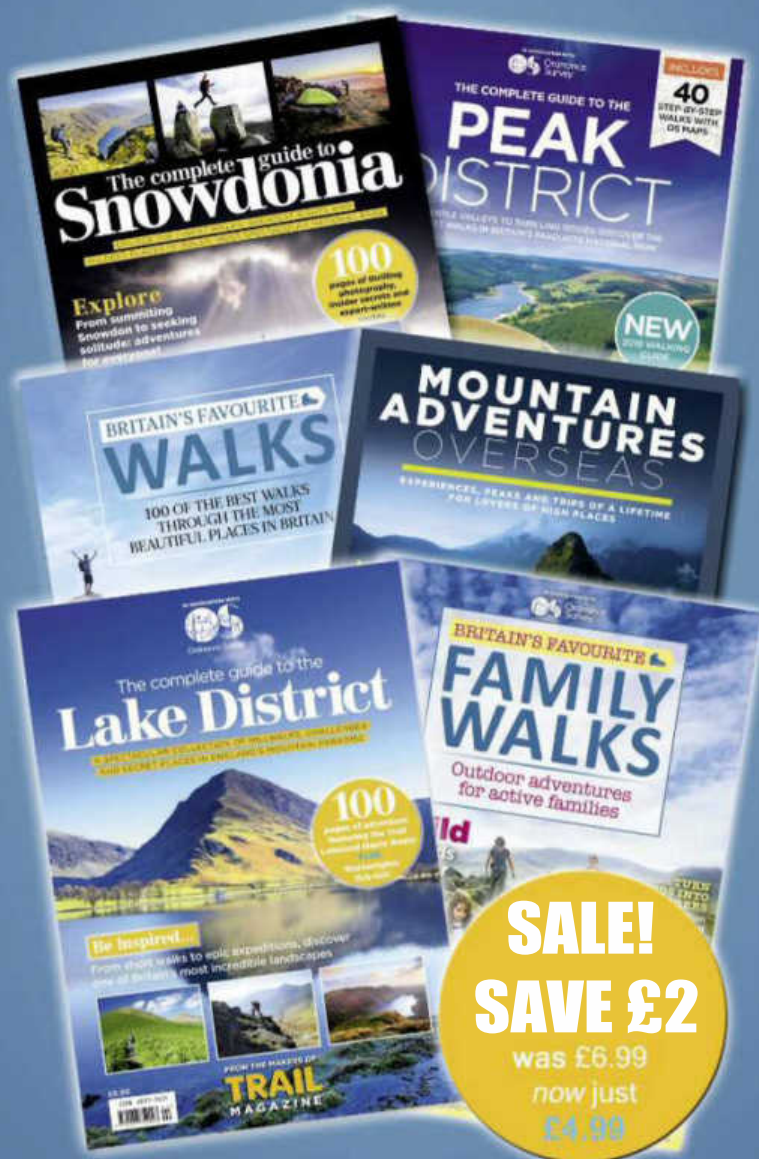


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**DIGITAL
Photo**

**Expert verdicts
you can trust on the
latest cameras & kit**

Gear



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DSLR CAMERAS

Canon strikes back with 1D X

The Canon 1D X Mark II comes hot on the heels of Nikon's top-flight D5 model featured in last month's news. Its body is strikingly similar in design and ergonomics to its predecessor – the 1D X – but inside, the housing is host to numerous improvements aimed squarely at professional sports and press photographers.

At the heart of the Mk II is a new 20.2Mp full-frame sensor that touts a native ISO range of 100-51,200, and dual-pixel AF technology – first seen on the Canon EOS 70D. This splits each pixel into two photodiodes, and means that faster autofocus performance is achieved when using Live View or shooting video. While we're talking about video, the Mark II offers internal 4K recording at 60fps, alongside Full HD at 120fps, ideal for producing slow motion video scenes.

The camera has a top burst shooting speed of 14fps with AF, or 16fps without, but to take full advantage of it and the 4K video modes you'll need to use a CFast card. The new CFast slot is still backwards-compatible with existing CompactFlash cards, but the old CF format won't give you the data rate now required to make use of the camera's top speeds.

The autofocus system has seen a revamp too, with its 61 points now covering a wider spread of the frame than on its forebear. Forty-one of these points are the faster cross-type, while the central five are dual cross-type, providing even greater speed and accuracy. To help when tracking moving subjects or shooting in dim lighting, these AF points can be set to remain illuminated in the viewfinder, too.

The rear display sees a jump in resolution for a clearer, more detailed view, and it also offers touch functionality for focusing in Live View or movie mode. It's not a smartphone-style



The Mark II replaces Canon's original 1D X launched in 2012.

touchscreen, however, so you can't swipe to navigate the camera's menus.

The camera's weather-resistant body has inputs for both ethernet-wired LAN and SuperSpeed USB 3.0. In-built GPS provides geotag information including auto-time syncing.

The Canon EOS 1D X Mark II is available to preorder now and carries a body-only price of £5199. www.canon.co.uk



UNDERWATER CAMERA

Leica X-U (Typ 113) launched

Leica, the German camera and lens manufacturer known for its premium rangefinders, has launched its first rugged compact aimed at outdoor adventurers. The X-U (Typ 113), created in collaboration with Audi Design, is shock-resistant, dust-sealed, and shatter proof. It boasts a bright Summilux 23mm f/1.7 lens, a 16.5 megapixel APS-C sensor and can capture both RAW and JPEG files.

For those who like to enjoy life beneath the ocean waves, the X-U features a Underwater Mode that alters the colour balance to compensate for sub-aqua shooting. The camera body is manufactured from a plastic core with aluminium plates fitted on the top and bottom. These are sealed to allow it to shoot at a maximum depth of 15m for up to 60mins. The Leica X-U is available now with a suggested retail price of £2400. www.leica-camera.com

COMPACT SYSTEM CAMERAS

Retro Pen-F revealed

Olympus has launched the latest model in its Pen Compact System Camera lineup – the Pen-F. A high-end variant of its popular Micro Four-Thirds sensor camera, it's priced at £999 body-only or £1099 with the M.ZUIKO 14-42mm f/3.5-5.6 lens. Heavily inspired by the classic Pen-F half-frame film cameras of the 1960s, the digital incarnation offers a 20.3Mp resolution – the highest pixel count of any Olympus MFT camera. Also of note is the 5-axis image stabilisation for shake-free images, a hi-res shot mode that combines eight images to create a 50Mp file, and a high-speed burst mode of 10fps. The Pen-F is on sale now, with a series of special events to celebrate the launch (see website for more).

www.olympus.co.uk



At 20.3Mp, the Pen-F's sensor offers the highest pixel count in the Pen range.

Yongnuo YN360 light stick

Yongnuo is known for its lenses and flashguns but has now announced an app-controlled LED bar. The LED brightness can be adjusted and the colours changed for creative light painting. The price is still to be finalised but should be around £60, and it will ship in March.

www.yongnuo.eu



ACTION CAMS

Nikon KeyMission 360

Nikon has jumped into the action cam market after announcing the launch of the KeyMission 360 at the CES Show in Las Vegas. The KeyMission 360 is a wearable camera capable of recording a 360-degree field of view in high-quality, 4K video.

Scheduled for release from April, the KeyMission 360 features an image sensor and lens combination on opposite sides of the device, and images from each are combined in-camera to create a single realistic, high-definition, 360-degree image. Built to survive the demands of action photographers, the KeyMission 360 is waterproof to a depth of 30m and is also resistant to dust, low temperatures and shocks. Nikon claim it will cope with a variety of challenging conditions, typical of the action camera

market. The 360 degree view from the two lenses allows those viewing the video on a computer screen to scroll around the scene, shifting the perspective of the view that was recorded. This is done via a mouse or laptop touchpad, a bit like looking around an image on Google Streetview.

If you're using a smartphone or tablet, simply moving the device will change the perspective. Nikon has said that the KeyMission 360 will be the first in a range of action camera products from the brand, and that a variety of dedicated accessories are due to accompany this innovative camera.

As we go to press, no UK price information has so far been released, but we'll let you know as soon as it is!

www.nikon.co.uk

COMPACT SYSTEM CAMERAS

Sony A6300 announced

Sony has announced the launch of the A6300 – the long-awaited successor to its A6000 Compact System Camera. Boasting a 24.2Mp APS-C Exmor CMOS sensor, there are a number of headline-grabbing features, including a new 4D Focus system to make the most of the 425 phase-detection points – a record for a mirrorless camera. The autofocus system is backed up with lightning quick reaction times, with Sony claiming the AF system can lock onto a subject in just 0.05sec, which would make it class-leading. The speedy figure continues with the burst mode, as the A6300 can fire off 11 frames per second to capture exciting sports sequences.

Built around a magnesium-alloy body and featuring both Wi-Fi and NFC for remote shooting and easy pairing with a smart device, the A6300 will appeal to videographers, too. It shoots 4K and Full HD movies at 120fps, enabling users to capture smooth slow-motion footage.

No UK price has yet been announced, but the A6300 will sell for \$1000 (body-only) in the USA. www.sony.co.uk



Zeiss phone lenses

Zeiss has launched a selection of lenses to work with Apple iPhone cameras. The first three lenses – wide-angle, telephoto and a macro lens with a zoom function – are scheduled to go on sale in Spring. www.zeiss.co.uk



Manfrotto 190 Go! Carbon

Manfrotto has added a new tripod to its 190Go! range with the release of a carbon fibre model. The 190Go! Carbon tips the scales at 1.67kg – 18% lighter than current models in the 190 range, helping outdoor photographers take some weight off their backs. www.manfrotto.co.uk



GRAB AND GO

Looking for lightweight gear protection that won't break the bank? We put six sub-£50 shoulder bags through their paces and reveal which is the best...

TEST BY MATT HIGGS

Following the essentials of a camera, lens and memory card, a robust camera bag should be at the top of every photographer's wishlist. Offering protection from knocks, scrapes and the elements, shoulder bags are a compact and practical solution that won't weigh you down. Their capacity may be smaller than a backpack, but they're less cumbersome and give speedy access to gear. For those that like to travel light, they're the ideal choice.

We look at six of the market's best offerings under £50, and give you all the information you need to decide which will suit you best.

How we did the test

We placed a DSLR paired with a standard zoom in the bag, then fitted in as many extra lenses as possible, before taking a 40-minute walk over rugged terrain. We took shots periodically, checking the ease of access offered by zip entries and accessory pockets.

QUICK GUIDE

WHAT TO LOOK FOR

Rain cover

All six of these shoulder bags will withstand a light shower, but several also offer a dedicated rain cover to protect your equipment from more testing conditions.

Support

With just one strap these bags put pressure on a single shoulder. This makes good padding essential if you're intending to use it for sustained periods or to carry heavier kit.

Capacity

Not all shoulder bags are the same size, so if you're looking to carry a couple of spare lenses or a few accessories, it's worth considering one of the larger options here.

Removable insert

Some of the bags tested contain a padded and removable insert or 'pod' that can be used in an alternative bag. If this flexibility is important to you, choose one of the six that offers this feature.



CASE LOGIC FLXM-101 REFLEXION £49



TENBA TOOLS PACKLITE & BYOB 10 £49

SHOULDER BAG GROUP TEST

**MANFROTTO ADVANCED
ACTIVE 6** £44



LOWEPRO NOVA 170 AW
£46



BENRO COOL WALKER S30
£44

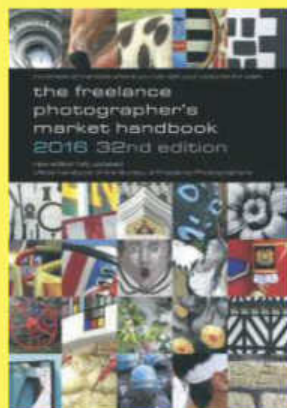


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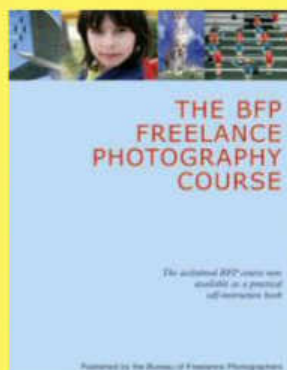


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Described as the photographer's bible, this 224-page BFP Handbook has hundreds of markets where you can sell your pictures for £££s. It includes magazines, greetings card and calendar publishers, picture libraries, newspapers, book publishers etc.

Now in its 32nd year, *The Freelance Photographer's Market Handbook 2016* gives full details of the type of photos – subject matter etc – being sought, fees paid, and exactly where to send your pictures.

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It's a practical course with 16 lessons covering everything you need to know to sell your pictures to magazines, greetings cards, calendars, newspapers, books etc. When ordered from the BFP, it comes with a set of tutorials to guide you through the lessons.

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Hatfield AL10 1FY



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 Special access. Static & in-flight bird shots. Cheetahs & Tigers in superb natural settings. New Cheetah Cubs Bengal & White Tiger.
 April 9th, May 7th, £119

Golden Eagle Experience, Leics.
 Max 8 persons. Static & flying of Golden Eagle in stunning woodland location. Other birds of prey. Owls, Hawks, Goshawk etc.
 April 10th, May 8th £99

Bats & Fill-in Flash Tuition, Oxford
 Indoor & outdoor venue. Max 4 persons. Expert tuition on all fill-in flash techniques. Free loan of equipment if req'd. April 14, 15 £139

Gorillas, Monkeys, and African Safaris
 Port Lympne, Kent. Superb access to Gorillas. Three sessions with no wires or fences. VIP off-road African Safari. Zebra, Ostrich, Eland, Wildebeest, Rhino, Giraffe, Deer. April 3, 24, May 1, 2. £155

Small Cats Workshop, Herts
 Snow Leopards, Amur Leopards, Pumas, Lynx, Leopard Cat, Caracal, Serval, Jaguarundi & more. April 4th, 25th, 28th, £99

Professional Standard Birds of Prey Shoot - Venue 1 Bamburgh, Northumberland.
 Amazing photo opportunities. Hill top views. Rocks, stone walls, single trees and gorse bushes abound. Golden Eagle, Peregrine Falcon, Snowy Owl and more in really natural situations. Perfect "in the wild" shots. Can combine with Bass/Farne. June 18, 19. £139

Gannets diving off Bass Rock
 New workshop. Amazing diving shots. Sail around Bass Rock without landing on the island. 1 hour of throwing fish in the sea for Gannets to catch. June 24th 8am, June 24th 10am £99

Birds of Prey on Lindisfarne Island NEW !!
 JUNE 2, 3: New workshop for 2016. Photograph a Short Eared Owl in its natural habitat before continuing with selection from Eagle Owl, Long Eared Owl, Barn Owl, Buzzard, Kestrel, Little Owl, Tawny Owl using boats, Lindisfarne Castle & fishing props as backdrops £139

Professional Standard Birds of Prey Shoot - Venue 2, Bamburgh, Northumberland.
 - Now including Snowy & Short Eared Owls
 HIGHLY RECOMMENDED. New venue. Totally unconnected with previous location. New Falconer & Birds. Birds photographed in front of an amazingly beautiful waterfall. Unique. Up to ten different species of birds photographed. June 14th, 21st, 27th. £139

Big Cats Workshop, Kent
 Lions, Tigers, Leopards, Cheetahs, Pumas, Lynx, & Serval etc. Get amazingly close. Great photo opportunities. UK's most popular wildlife photo location. Max 12 photographers. Apr 2, 23, 30, £155

Big Cats Pro Workshop, Kent
 This is the same workshop as above, but with just SIX photographers. People of all abilities welcome. Lunchtime photo critique. More time for personal interaction with Cats. Also Jaguar. March 31st, April 1st, 22nd, 29th £199

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Bass Rock Gannets (60 miles north Farne Is.)
 Private boat. Exclusive use of island. 150,000 Gannets. Absolutely amazing Photos. 5 hours on rock Get really close. Sole use of island for our workshop Gannets diving for large box of fish near the island. June 5th, 12th, 20th, 23rd £225

Birds of Prey, Bedfordshire
 Private flying displays on pre-determined flight paths for hard to get in-flight shots. Super static photos. Now including Red Tailed Kites & Long Eared Owls, Great Grey Owl, Kestrel, plus various Eagles, Hawks, Eagles etc. April 16th, 17th £99

Small Mammals, Insects & Reptiles NEW !!
 June 6, 7; Indoor studio set-ups ensuring professional quality photos of stunning subjects. Studio lighting set up for you. Triggers to fit your camera supplied. Cameras and lenses can be loaned without charge. Innovative set-ups to maximise your opportunities. Max 4 persons. Harvest Mice, Red Eyed Tree Frogs, Praying Mantis, Locust, Bearded Dragon, Scorpion, Tarantula, Snakes etc. £199

For more information, please visit the website or call John or Nadine Wright on 01664 474040 (anytime) or 07779 648850.
 We will be most happy to discuss any workshop in detail, or to send more detailed information to anyone without internet access.
 Photographers on Safari, West End Studios, 55 Stapleford Road, Whissendine, Oakham, Rutland. LE15 7HF

**BENRO****Cool Walker S30 £44**

Despite being slightly more affordable than some of the other bags on test, the Cool Walker S30 has a reassuringly rugged build, and some of the most substantial gear protection on offer. Its well-padded internal compartment is large enough for a DSLR and three standard lenses, while thanks to thick, adjustable dividers, this space can be easily customised to suit any setup. The design also uniquely allows top or front access depending on the orientation of a Velcro partition inside.

Pockets found under the top flap and behind a zip on the front of the bag provide lots of room for camera accessories and personal items. An extra pouch on its side takes a water bottle – a welcome addition for those out for the day.

Not only is the bag's external layer manufactured from durable and water-resistant nylon, but further protection from the rain comes in the form of a dedicated cover that pulls out from a rear compartment. This gives the user peace of mind no matter what weather conditions they find themselves in. The S30 is also the only bag to feature feet on its bottom. These keep it clear of any mud and grime. There's a grab handle on the bag's top, and the shoulder strap features a good level of padding for comfortable use. A loop on the rear of the bag can be used to mount it on a belt if desired.

The Cool Walker S30 provides solid protection and great capacity at a very attractive price. A real value for money option.

With thick internal dividers and plenty of external padding, the S30 offers excellent gear protection.

**DIGITAL PHOTO Verdict**

PROS Good level of protection and interior layout is easy to customise

CONS Slightly heavier than some alternatives here

DESIGN & BUILD**CAPACITY****COMFORT****VALUE FOR MONEY****OVERALL SCORE****MANFROTTO****Advanced Active 6 £44**

The Advanced Active 6 has one of the simplest designs among the bags on test. Featuring a large main compartment with two adjustable internal dividers, it offers a reasonable level of protection for a DSLR and up to three lenses. The internal dividers feel substantial, but the padding at the bag's sides isn't as thick as some of its rivals. On the flipside, this does help to keep the bag light in weight.

Access to the main compartment is kept rapid thanks to the single zip entry, but it's arguably less secure than some others, as there's no additional buckle or clasp with which to fasten it.

There's a single deep pocket on each of its sides, and two smaller ones on the underside of the top, providing space for

smaller accessories. The bag has a grab handle and shoulder strap, although the padding on the latter doesn't match the more substantial support found on the Benro, Lowepro and Vanguard models. For shorter trips out this won't be an issue, but under more intensive use or with heavier loads, the strap offers less comfort.

Manufactured predominantly from nylon, the Active 6 is finished to a high standard. A separate rain cover comes bundled with the bag, and this is quick and easy to fit. Once in place, it protects the contents from the elements.

The Active 6 looks slick and gets a lot right, but there are others here offering more advanced features for a similar outlay, so it doesn't offer quite as much value.

The bag's separate rain cover can be easily packed into the one of its large side pockets.

**DIGITAL PHOTO Verdict**

PROS Light in weight and comes with all-weather cover

CONS Padding at the sides and shoulder strap not as substantial as some others

DESIGN & BUILD**CAPACITY****COMFORT****VALUE FOR MONEY****OVERALL SCORE**



EOS-1D X Mark II



Canon EOS-1D X Mark II Body

£5,199.00

EOS 5DS



Canon EOS 5DS Body

£2,699.00

EOS 5DS R



Canon EOS 5DS R Body

£3,199.00



D5



Nikon D5 Body

£5,199.00

D810



Nikon D810 Body

£2,349.00

D500



Nikon D500 Body

£1,729.00



EOS 5D MARK III BODY

£2,178.00



EOS 7D MARK III BODY

£1,179.00



EOS 6D BODY

£1,119.00

EOS 6D BODY + 24-105MM **£1,499.00**



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D750 BODY + 24-85MM **£1,716.00**



D610 BODY

£999.00

D610 + 24-85MM **£1,499.00**



D7200 BODY

£749.00

D7200 + 18-105MM **£919.00**



D5300 BODY

£389.00

D5300 BODY + 18-55MM **£459.00**

FUJIFILM



X-PRO 2 BODY

£1,349.00



X-T1 GRAPHITE

£919.00

X-T1 BLACK **£805.00**



X-100T BLACK/SILVER

£796.00



X-T10 BLACK/SILVER BODY

£449.00

SONY



ALPHA A7R II BODY

£2,599.00



ALPHA A7S II BODY

£2,499.00



ALPHA A7 II BODY

£1,179.00

ALPHA A7 II BODY + 24-240MM **£1,728.00**



CYBER-SHOT RX100 IV

£759.00

Canon Lenses

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| EF 50mm F1.8 STM | £97.00 |
| EF-S 60mm F2.8 USM Macro | £305.00 |
| EF 85mm F1.2L II USM | £1,499.00 |
| EF 100mm F2.8L IS USM Macro | £619.00 |
| EF 8-15mm F4.0L USM Fisheye | £899.00 |
| EF 16-35mm F2.8L USM II | £1,060.00 |
| EF 17-40mm F4.0L USM | £498.00 |
| EF 24-70mm F4L IS | £675.00 |
| EF 24-70mm F2.8L II USM | £1,400.00 |
| EF 24-105mm F4.0L IS USM | £727.00 |
| EF 24-105mm F3.5-5.6 IS STM | £375.00 |
| EF 70-200mm F2.8L IS USM II | £1,499.00 |
| EF 70-200mm F4.0L IS USM | £795.00 |
| EF 70-300mm F4.0-5.6 IS USM | £356.00 |
| EF 70-300mm F4.0-5.6L IS USM | £894.00 |
| EF 100-400mm F4.5-5.6L IS USM II | £1,799.00 |

Nikon Lenses

Nikon 300mm F4E PF ED VR

£1,499.00



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| 24-70mm F2.8G AF-S ED | £1,199.00 |
| 28-300mm F3.5-5.6G AF-S VR | £699.00 |
| 70-200mm F2.8G AF-S VR II | £1,579.00 |
| 70-200mm F4G AF-S ED VR | £1,079.00 |
| 80-400mm F4.5-5.6G ED VR | £1,799.00 |

Fujifilm Lenses

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| 14mm F2.8 XF | £607.00 |
| 18mm F2.8 XF | £349.00 |
| 23mm F1.4 XF | £607.00 |
| 27mm F2.8 Black or Silver XF | £281.00 |
| 35mm F1.4R XF | £367.00 |
| 56mm F1.2 XF | £687.00 |
| 56mm F1.2R XF APD | £999.00 |
| 60mm F2.4R Macro XF | £405.00 |
| 10-24mm F4 R XF | £687.00 |
| 18-135mm F3.5-5.6 WR | £557.00 |
| 50-140mm F2.8 WR OIS | £1,037.00 |
| 50-230mm F4.5-6.7 OIS Black or Silver XC | £289.00 |
| 55-200mm F3.5-4.8 R LM OIS XF | £467.00 |

Sony Lenses

Sony FE 24-240mm F3.5-6.3 OSS

£749.00



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| 24-70mm F4 ZA OSS Vario-Tessar T* FE | £799.00 |
| 35mm F2.8 ZA Sonnar T* FE | £521.00 |
| 55mm F1.8 ZA Sonnar T* FE | £618.00 |
| 70-200mm F4 G OSS FE | £999.00 |
| 90mm F2.8 Macro G OSS FE | £899.00 |
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Manfrotto Tripods & Heads



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| MT05XPRO3 Tripod | £139.00 |
| 190GO Tripod | £159.00 |
| XPRO Ball Head | £114.00 |
| XPRO3W 3 Way Geared Head | £169.00 |
| MT190XPRO4 Tripod | £159.00 |
| MT190CXPRO3 Carbon Fibre Tripod | £199.00 |
| MT190CXPRO4 Carbon Fibre Tripod | £235.00 |
| MT05CXPRO3 Carbon Fibre Tripod | £269.00 |
| XPRO 3 Way Head | £89.00 |



Studio Lighting

Profoto D1 Studio Kit 250/250 Air

£1,999.00



Profoto B2 250 AirTTL To-Go Kit

£1,495.00



Bowens Gemini 500/500R Twin Head Kit

£895.00



Bowens Gemini 400/400Rx Umbrella Kit

£599.00



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LOWEPRO

Nova 170 AW £46

With standout features and pockets-a-plenty, there's an awful lot to like about the Nova 170 AW. First off, its unique overlap lid ensures no rain can find its way in to damage gear. It does this by cleverly hiding the main compartment's zip underneath an oversized, water-resistant flap. This, coupled with the dedicated rain cover that pulls up from the bag's base, means you get outstanding protection from even the most extreme weather.

With enough room for a DSLR, lens and two extra optics, the main compartment is well-cushioned from knocks, thanks to its thick padded sides and adjustable dividers. There are dual SD card pouches and a large pocket on the underside of the top flap, while it

also boasts three zipped pockets on its exterior. This means that all sorts of personal items can be easily stowed, while a sports bottle or flask can be placed in one of two mesh pockets on the Nova's side.

User comfort hasn't been forgotten either; a large pad provides excellent support on the strap, while a non-slip segment keeps the bag firmly on the shoulder. A grab handle and belt loop are also present.

Our one minor gripe with the Nova is its fabric base, which picked up mud and felt less stable than some of the rubber-bottomed options when placed on the ground.

Faultlessly manufactured, the Nova's build quality stands out. It's available in brown, red and blue alongside classic black.

The Nova 170 AW offers excellent protection from the weather with its rain cover and unique overlap.



DIGITAL PHOTO Verdict

PROS Well designed and expertly manufactured
CONS With a fabric base, mud clings to the bag's base if it's put down on boggy ground

DESIGN & BUILD
CAPACITY
COMFORT
VALUE FOR MONEY
OVERALL SCORE



CASE LOGIC

FLXM-101 Reflexion £49

Camera bags are renowned for being practical, but rarely could be described as stylish in the fashion sense. The Reflexion, however, with its messenger bag design, press-studs, oversized zip and colour schemes (Pomegranate, Morel and Anthracite), is exactly that. This makes it a great choice for the more fashion conscious or those looking to protect their gear with something that doesn't scream 'I'm a photographer!'.

The aesthetic appeal does have an impact on the bag's capacity and the protection it offers, however. Rather than using padding on the bag itself, the Reflexion instead offers a padded insert with a cinch top that fits inside it. This will take a DSLR with lens attached, but doesn't leave room for extra lenses.

What it does mean, though, is that you can use the Reflexion as a regular shoulder bag, or place the removable insert in another bag to protect your camera.

Within the main compartment there's also a padded section for a 9.5in tablet – a feature unique to the Reflexion. When it comes to accessory pockets, it has plenty, giving lots of room for filters and memory cards, along with your wallet, keys and phone. It also has a mesh side pocket for a water bottle, and a rubberised base to protect it from the ground.

Its strap wasn't as comfortable as some of its rivals despite being padded, and disappointingly, it also lacks a rain cover. That aside, it does offer a chic option for those carrying the bare essentials.

With its removable insert the bag is one of the more flexible options in this group test.



DIGITAL PHOTO Verdict

PROS Trendy design with versatile padded insert for a camera & lens
CONS Lacks gear capacity despite its larger size

DESIGN & BUILD
CAPACITY
COMFORT
VALUE FOR MONEY
OVERALL SCORE





TENBA Tools Packlite & BYOB 10 £49

The shoulder bag from Tenba is actually two different products – the Packlite bag that costs £19, and the BYOB (Bring Your Own Bag) 10 insert priced at £29.99. The idea is that a photographer can use several BYOBs for storing all their equipment, and use the appropriate outer bag as required. It's an interesting concept, but didn't prove as successful as it might over the course of our tests.

Weighing just 181g, the Packlite is made of water-repellent nylon, but lacks any padding of its own. Basic in design, it features a single zip that grants access to an internal space large enough for the BYOB 10 insert, and little else. For easy transportation when not in use it can be folded into a mesh pocket found on its side. The simplicity

doesn't stop there, as its strap is very thin and lacks any padding at all. This makes it uncomfortable when filled with heavy gear.

The BYOB 10 insert was a different story, and can be placed in any other bag or rucksack to offer as much comfort as you require. The insert is really well thought out, and is large enough to store a camera and two or three lenses.

It offers good protection and excellent space customisation with five padded dividers. It also has several pockets built into the underside of its top, and two side meshes for further accessories. All-in-all, it's a better insert than the one offered in the Reflexion. The ratings below take the positives of the BYOB 10 and the downsides of the Packlite into account.

The BYOB 10 insert offers an inexpensive way to convert any rucksack into a camera bag.



DIGITAL Photo Verdict

PROS The BYOB 10 insert enables space to be well customised
CONS The Packlite offers a basic outer with no padding

DESIGN & BUILD
CAPACITY
COMFORT
VALUE FOR MONEY
OVERALL SCORE



VANGUARD UP-Rise II 22 £49

With a thick internal lining and padded dividers, the UP-Rise II 22 provides excellent protection for a DSLR with standard lens, and two additional optics. Its internal space is a little more compact than some of the others here, but it does benefit from an expansion segment that can be unzipped and pulled out to provide more height. A soft, screen-protecting pad found inside this main compartment is a nice touch, helping to safeguard your camera's LCD display from scrapes and scratches. While the bag lacks the wider assortment of pockets found on the Lowepro or Benro models, it does have two memory card slots on the underside of its top flap, a pouch on its side, and a large zipped pocket on the front for accessories and personal items.

Thanks to a rain cover hidden inside a rear compartment and its water-resistant base, the bag offers an excellent level of weather protection. A padded loop found on the rear can be used with Vanguard's ICS belt if desired (though this is sold separately).

Its strap features comfortable padding and a non-slip segment that makes it well-suited for sustained use.

While there's little to lift the UP-Rise II 22 above the similar designs and slightly greater capacities of the Benro and Lowepro bags, it too touts a very high-quality build and all the essential features demanded by the discerning photographer. Overall, this is a very solid shoulder bag that won't let down the gear it carries or its user's shoulder.

The UP-Rise's capacity can be expanded by releasing a clasp and unzipping its middle section.



DIGITAL Photo Verdict

PROS Brilliant build quality, solid gear protection
CONS Not many, though it lacks some of the capacity offered by rivals

DESIGN & BUILD
CAPACITY
COMFORT
VALUE FOR MONEY
OVERALL SCORE



VERDICT

The Nova 170AW edges ahead

All six of the shoulder bags in this hard-fought test offer an affordable way to securely carry your kit while you shoot on the go. Perfect for smaller DSLR setups and CSCs, they blend compact size with dependable protection. While there is no singular option that will suit every photographer's needs, three of the bags did pull ahead of the pack with their larger internal capacities, comfortable straps and high-quality build. These were the Benro Cool Walker S30, the Lowepro Nova 170 AW and the Vanguard Up-Rise II 22. With only a £5 price difference between them, and all three adopting similar top-opening designs, picking just one to win our coveted Gold Award was no easy choice.

With excellent interior padding that will cushion its contents from knocks and scrapes, a unique rainproof overflap, and a seemingly never-ending array of pockets, the Lowepro Nova 170 AW did enough to push itself into the top spot. Okay, so its functional styling isn't as trendy as the Case Logic Reflexion (despite several colour options), and its construction does lack a more durable base, but in



With some unique features and plenty of storage space for personal items and camera gear, the Lowepro Nova 170AW won our Gold Award.

all other areas it either matched or bettered its rivals. At £46, we wouldn't hesitate to recommend it.

Pushing the Up-Rise II 22 into third place and stealing the Silver Award in second place is the Benro Cool Walker S30. With the ability to customise its layout for quick front access, and a greater internal space for storage, it did enough to offset the lack of a built-in screen protector as offered by



Finishing a close second and taking our Silver Award is Benro's Cool Walker S30. At £44, it offers good capacity, a rain cover and a comfortable strap.

the Vanguard. At just £44, it offers everything needed in a shoulder bag at a value-for-money price.

The flexible alternative

While they failed to offer enough as part of a complete package to beat the winners here, the padded camera inserts or 'pods' found in the Case Logic and Tenba bags remain an innovative alternative to a standard, dedicated camera bag. Of

these, the Tenba option offered the best features.

Available for just £29, the Tenba BYOB 10 offered a high level of protection and could be slipped easily inside a normal rucksack or messenger bag. For those who only use their cameras occasionally outdoors, or prefer a more subtle approach to transporting their kit, it makes a smart buy on its own.

| | BENRO COOL WALKER S30 | MANFROTTO ADVANCED ACTIVE 6 | LOWEPRO NOVA 170AW | CASE LOGIC FLXM-101 REFLEXION | TENBA TOOLS PACKLITE AND BYOB 10 | VANGUARD UP-RISE II 22 |
|-----------------------------|---|---|---|--|---|---|
| |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| STREET PRICE | £44 | £44 | £46 | £49 | £49 | £49 |
| EXTERNAL DIMENSIONS (WxDxH) | 26x20x24cm | 26x16x23cm | 24x18x24cm | 31x12x28cm | 33x13x23cm | 24x18x23cm |
| INTERIOR DIMENSIONS (WxDxH) | 24x14x20cm | 23x13x20cm | 22x12x21cm | 20x9x17cm (Inlay) | 25x11x19cm | 19x12x18cm |
| WEIGHT (WITHOUT GEAR) | 0.7kg | 0.5kg | 0.6kg | 0.8kg | 0.5kg | 0.5kg |
| SEPARATE WEATHER SHIELD | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | No | Yes |
| PADDED STRAP | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | Yes |
| REMOVABLE INLAY | No | No | No | Yes | Yes | No |
| WEBSITE | benroeu.com | manfrotto.co.uk | lowepro.co.uk | caselogic.com | tenba.com | vanguardworld.co.uk |

FUJI X-PRO2 / CSC / £1349 BODY ONLY

THE NEW 'X' FACTOR

Is Fuji's much-anticipated reinvention of its original X-Mount CSC worth the long wait? We investigate the charms of the X-Pro2

BY MATT HIGGS

When the X-Pro1 was launched back in 2012 it caused a huge stir with its rangefinder-style design, hybrid viewfinder and impressive image quality. It was Fuji's first X-mount release, and the pioneer of a range that has proved to be highly appealing in the compact system camera (CSC) market.

But technology advances at a pace, and in four years, the expectations of a pro-quality CSC

have grown. Returning to fly the Fuji flag once more, the long-awaited X-Pro2 maintains its forebear's retro aesthetic, but overhauls its core specifications. With an improved sensor, processor, autofocus system and viewfinder, it's a whole new beast on the inside.

But does this new incarnation of the X-Pro have the features and performance to trump its more numerous rivals this time round? Let's find out...

Features & Build

At 24.3Mp, the X-Pro2 is built around the largest resolution APS-C size sensor found to date in an X-series camera. Newly developed, the X-Trans CMOS III has a random colour filter array to reduce moiré and false colour, without the need for an optical low-pass filter. Files can be output as either JPEGs or RAWs at a maximum size of 6000x4000px, and there's the option to use space-saving lossless compression if desired. Unlike some of its rivals, the X-Pro2 does not feature sensor-based image stabilisation, but can take advantage of the optical stabilisation offered by many X-mount lenses.

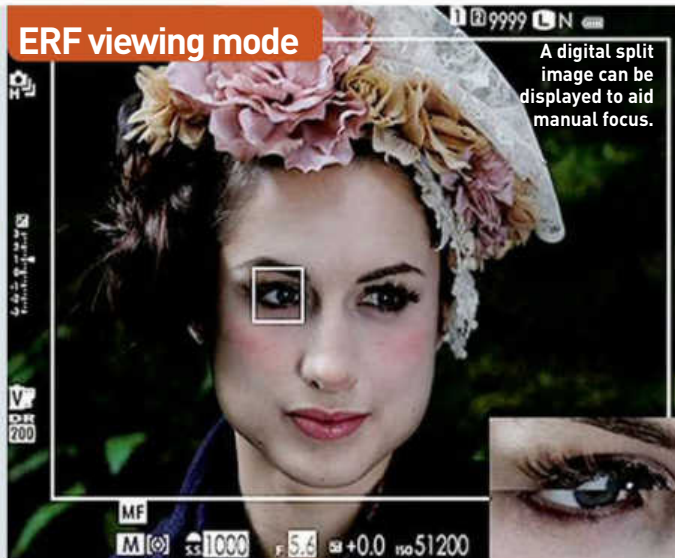
Complementing the sensor is a new processing engine – the X Processor Pro.

The camera's native ISO range now tops out at 12,800, with 200 maintained as its lowest setting. The X-Pro2 also offers three expanded ISO levels – 100, 25,600 and 51,200 – all of which remain available when shooting in RAW.

At 8fps it offers a solid, though not exactly ground-breaking, continuous shooting speed. Full HD video can be recorded at 60fps, but there's no 4K option. Available shutter speed ranges from 30secs to 1/8000sec, but is expandable to an impressive 1/32,000sec using the electronic shutter. There's also a Bulb mode for longer exposures up to 60mins. Not forgetting the connectivity expected of a modern CSC, Wi-Fi enables remote operation and file transfer via Fuji's Camera Remote app. Like the X-Pro1, there's no



ERF viewing mode



“AT 24.3MP, THE X-PRO2 IS BUILT AROUND THE LARGEST RESOLUTION SENSOR FOUND TO DATE IN AN X-SERIES CAMERA”

built-in flash, but it does feature a hotshoe. It's also the first X-series camera to provide dual SD card slots, and these can be assigned to either file backup or storage expansion duties.

Measuring 141x83x46mm, the retro-styled X-Pro2 is quite chunky, and at 495g, it's not light for a CSC. It does, however, benefit from a magnesium-alloy chassis, milled aluminium dials

Top feature Unique Hybrid Viewfinder

Blending the benefits of both optical (OVF) and electronic viewfinders (EVF), the X-Pro2 is fitted with Fuji's unique Advanced Hybrid Multi Viewfinder. This unit, an update of the one found in the X-Pro1, offers three different viewing modes that can be selected by flicking a lever on the camera's front. The first makes use of a Reverse Galilean OVF to offer 92% coverage of the frame and a natural view of the scene. The second utilises a 0.48in 2360K-dot EVF to show a simulation of the final image with exposure settings

and white balance applied. The third is the Electronic Rangefinder (ERF) mode, and simultaneously displays a small EVF window on top of the optical view to aid accurate focusing. This EVF window can be customised to one of three magnification settings, 100%, 2.5x magnification and 6x magnification.

The Advanced Hybrid Multi Viewfinder also features a dioptre so you can tune it precisely to your eyesight, and there's an eyestart sensor which switches the unit on when held up to the eye.

The X-Pro2 maintains the slick, rangefinder styling of the X-Pro1.



Key features of the Fujii X-Pro2

Hotshoe

While the camera lacks a pop-up flash, it does have a hotshoe for use with external flashguns.

Shutter/ISO dial

The X-Pro2 features a dual-function control dial that adjusts shutter speed, and by lifting its outer bezel, ISO as well.



Viewfinder

The camera sports an Advanced Hybrid Multi viewfinder that allows users to switch between optical and electronic views of the scene.



Monitor

A fixed 3in, 1640k-dot LCD complements the hybrid viewfinder. This display sits at the bottom left of the camera, with all control buttons placed to the right, enabling them to be operated when the X-Pro2 is held up to the eye.

Quickspec

Street price £1349 body-only
Resolution 24.3Mp (6000 x 4000px)
Format RAW & JPEG
Sensor APS-C X-Trans CMOS III
ISO 200-12,800 (100 expanded low, 51,200 expanded high)
Shutter 30secs-1/32000sec & Bulb mode
AF system Intelligent Hybrid AF
Focusing modes Manual, Single AF, Continuous AF
Metering Multi, Spot, Average, Centre-weighted
Burst rate 8fps
Monitor 3in, 1620K-dot LCD
Viewfinder Hybrid, 2360K-dot 0.48in TFT EVF / OVf with 92% coverage
Pop-up flash No
Hotshoe Yes
Video Full HD 1920x1080 @ 60p
Connectivity Wi-Fi
Write speeds 0.8sec RAW
Storage SD, SDHC, SDXC
Weight 495g
Dimensions (WxHxD) 141x83x46mm
Visit www.fujifilm.eu/uk



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Free
Admission

Sicily
culture
and
conquest

Egypt
faith
after the
pharaohs

Sunken
cities
Egypt's
lost
worlds

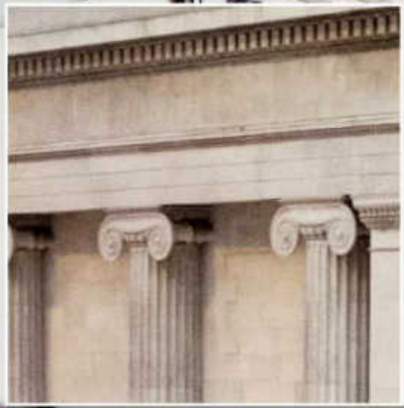


Image quality Detail

Thanks to its 24.3Mp X-Trans CMOS II the X-Pro2 can capture a level of detail unrivalled by any other Fuji CSC, and matches or betters many competing cameras with APS-C sensors. With this new resolution, boosted from the 16.3Mp of the X-Pro1, users will be able to make prints of up to 13x20in in size at 300dpi with total confidence.

To save on card space, the file size of these larger images can be reduced using the compressed RAW option. This is lossless, so quality isn't affected.

and 61 weatherproof seals on its body. At the bottom left of the camera's rear is a 3in LCD screen with an improved 1620k-dot resolution. Unlike some rivals, it's not a touchscreen, and doesn't articulate to assist with framing from awkward angles. Its positioning does allow all buttons and controls to be placed on the right hand side, though, which makes for good handling. Matched with this display is one of the X-Pro2's most distinctive features, its Advanced Hybrid Multi viewfinder. This combines an optical viewfinder giving 92% coverage of the frame with a 2360K-dot electronic viewfinder.

Performance

Despite a small raised grip on its front and a thumbrest on its rear, the X-Pro 2 feels quite square and angular in the hand. However, its button placement is intuitive, with major settings within easy reach, even when the camera is held up to the eye. On its top is the power switch, a shutter button with cable release thread, a function button and two large dials, one for Exposure Compensation, and one with a dual-function shutter speed/ISO control. There are also front and rear command dials on the body. A Quick Menu button keeps many of the most-common settings close to hand, while a new My Menu feature allows users to assign their 16 favourite settings to a custom screen.

Like many Fuji models, the X-Pro2 features a substantial range of film simulation options, and the new 'Acros' mono mode takes the total to 15.

The Hybrid autofocus system features 77 phase-detection

points that cover around 40% of the frame, alongside contrast-detect AF which covers almost the entire frame. While the speed of the original X-Pro1's AF was rather pedestrian, we found this new system to be both highly accurate and responsive. The active AF point can be quickly selected with a dedicated joystick on the camera's rear. Available AF modes include Single-shot and Continuous, while users can choose between single-point, zone and wide/tracking focusing. For those that prefer to focus manually, the camera offers focus peaking and digital split image for accurate results.

In our tests, single RAWs took 0.8sec to write to card, while JPEGs took half that time. When set to its 8fps burst mode, the buffer filled after 26 RAWs, taking 15secs to write. JPEGs

filled the buffer after 76 shots and wrote to the card in 17secs.

Value for money

At £1349 body-only, the X-Pro2's unique viewfinder, excellent

sensor and improved AF go a long way to justify the £500 premium it carries over its X-T1 sibling. But it does lack the more advanced video features of the Panasonic GX8 (£779 body-only), and the vari-angle touchscreen offered by the retro styled Olympus Pen-F (£999 body-only). There's also Sony's full-frame A7 to contend with, which costs just £975 with a 28-70mm lens.

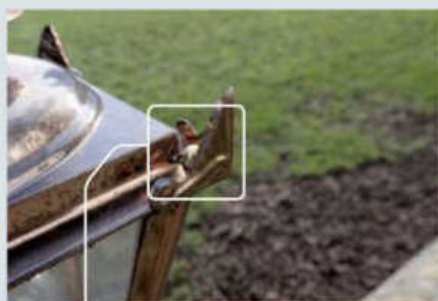
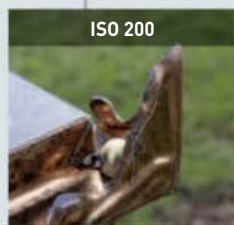
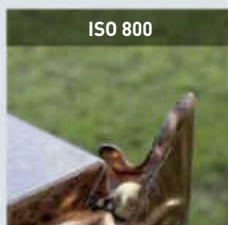


Image quality ISO

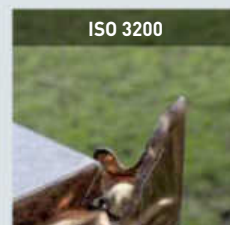
The X-Pro 2's RAW shots maintain a very impressive Noise performance right up until to ISO 3200, and with some noise reduction during editing, remain usable throughout the camera's native ISO range. However, the two expanded levels of 25,600 and 51,200 do suffer from luminance and colour Noise, so results aren't as refined. JPEGs are generally well processed; although at 12,800 fine detail is compromised due to strong Noise Reduction. Overall, this is a solid ISO performance.



ISO 200



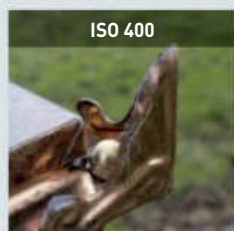
ISO 800



ISO 3200



ISO 12800



ISO 400

"BUTTON PLACEMENT IS INTUITIVE, KEEPING MAJOR SETTINGS WITHIN EASY REACH, EVEN WHEN THE CAMERA IS HELD UP TO THE EYE"

DIGITAL PHOTO Verdict

With its refined build, all-metal body and classically-styled exterior, there's no doubting the X-Pro2's prestige status. But despite the massive improvements to its resolution, AF performance, and on-board technology, some of its features could be seen as a little behind the curve when compared to the flagship CSCs it competes against. 4K video and an articulating touchscreen are not incorporated, and while videographers aren't the X-Pro2's target market, some street photographers might feel

disappointed with the lack of a vari-angle display. But in use, these factors are soon forgotten, making the X-Pro2 a very attractive proposition. Intuitive handling, inspired Hybrid Viewfinder and great image quality add up to a premium CSC oozing retro charm. And above all, it's a real joy to use.

| | |
|------------------|-------|
| Features & build | ★★★★☆ |
| Performance | ★★★★★ |
| Image quality | ★★★★★ |
| Value for money | ★★★★☆ |
| Overall score | ★★★★★ |

GADGETS & GIZMOS

We review the latest photo accessories to hit the shelves

TESTS BY MATT HIGGS, ANDY HEATHER & MATTY GRAHAM

CONNECTED CAMERA / £449

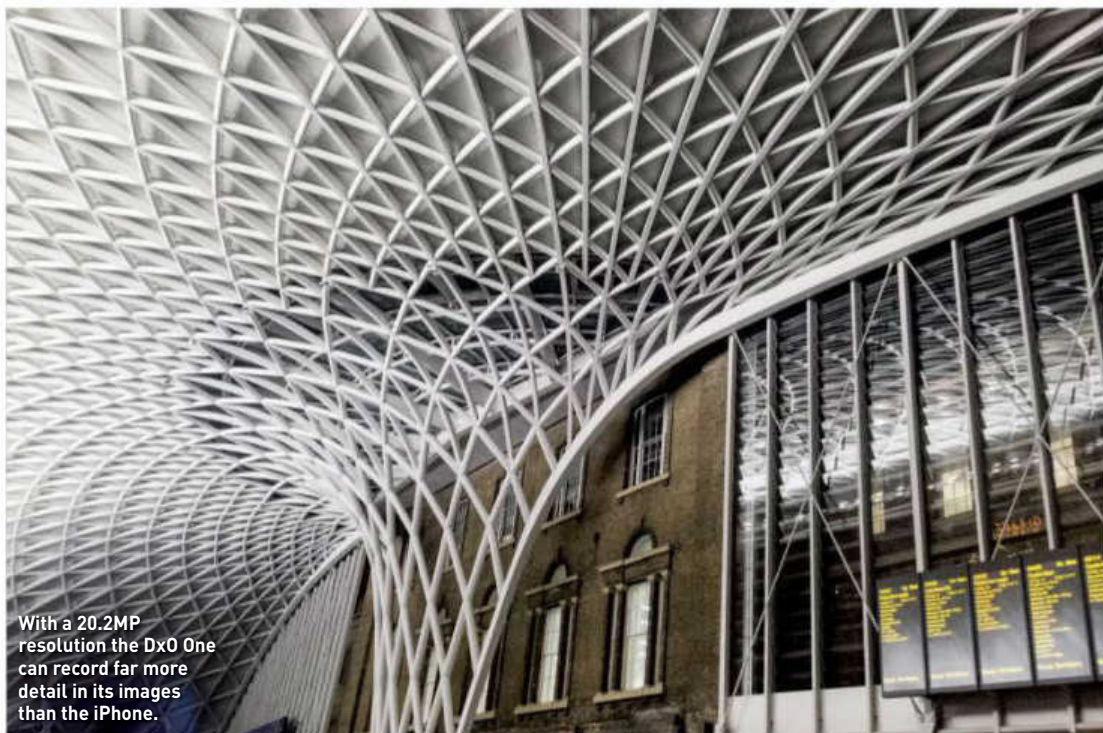
DxO ONE camera

Features 1in CMOS sensor, 32mm f/1.8 lens, manual shooting, Lightning port **Visit** www.dxo.com

While compact camera sales are experiencing a downturn that's in part due to smartphones, DxO, a brand previously associated with image processing technology, has entered the camera market. Its first-ever release, the One, is a companion device for iPhone and iPad that claims to capture professional quality images. It's not the first camera to be aimed at smartphone users looking for better image quality, but it does offer a unique set of features designed to turn heads.

"THIS MATCHBOX SIZED CAMERA MANAGES TO CARRY THE WORLD'S SMALLEST 1IN CMOS SENSOR"

Despite being only matchbox sized, at the One's core is the world's smallest 1in BSI (Backside Illuminated) CMOS sensor. This sensor is physically much larger than that found in an iPhone, helping to improve both dynamic range and noise control in shots, while simultaneously boosting detail capture with its 20.2MP resolution. Native ISO range stretches from 100-12,800, while a burst of RAW files can be captured at 8fps, or Full HD video recorded at 30fps. Its 32mm equivalent lens is perfect for most day-to-day subjects and benefits from a large f/1.8 aperture. Connecting via a Lightning port that flips out from its side, the One is mostly controlled via an iOS app that enables full, Manual shooting. This effectively turns the attached device's



With a 20.2MP resolution the DxO One can record far more detail in its images than the iPhone.



As the One itself has minimal buttons, nearly all control is via the connected iPhone.

display into a LiveView monitor, with touch focus and a full menu for shooting options including various metering and white balance modes. Once the shutter is triggered via either the on-screen icon or the One's single top button, a JPEG, DNG, or DxO's own Super RAW format file is saved to a micro SD. A small OLED screen on the One's rear displays the available memory and remaining battery life (approx. 200 shots when fully charged), but can't be used for Live View.

When not attached to an iPhone or iPad, the camera's functions are limited to the fully automatic capture of video or stills.

In terms of image quality the One is on a par with similarly priced compacts that carry a 1in sensor. This is to be applauded given its truly diminutive size. However with a relatively short battery life, restricted independent functionality, and a price tag of £450, it's not going to appeal to everyone.

DIGITAL PHOTO Verdict

While not to a 'professional' level, the One does fulfil its aim of giving iPhone users improved image quality and greater control. At its current price though, it is expensive.

Rating



The One is charged via Micro USB.

EXTERNAL STORAGE / FROM £97

Samsung T1 USB 3.0 SSD

Features Transfer speed of up to 450MB/s, 256-bit encryption, weighs just 30g **Visit** www.samsung.co.uk

There are external drives that claim to be portable, and then there's the Samsung T1. Weighing less than 30g, and no larger than a business card in all but depth, it's a truly pocketable storage solution that carries some impressive specifications. Available in three capacities: 250GB (£97), 500GB (£158) and 1TB (£305), the largest device has enough space for over 45,000 image files at 22MB a piece! Driven by Samsung's TurboWrite technology, read and write speeds of up to 450MB/s are claimed, and though we found it slightly slower in operation, it is a pleasingly quick device. Fitted with a USB 3.0 port, it's also backwards compatible with USB 2.0.

Most importantly though, the T1 is a solid-state drive. This means that unlike a traditional hard drive, it has no moving parts, making it far more resistant against failures



caused by shock, impact or vibration. For those looking for peace of mind when they store their shots, this makes it very attractive, and there's a 3-year manufacturer warranty to back it up. While it's not the cheapest external hard drive on the market, its excellent portability and reliability does represent good value for money.

DIGITAL PHOTO Verdict

This is a very impressive drive for those that can afford the luxury of solid state storage.

Rating



PREMIUM PHOTO BOOK / FROM £45

Photobox A4 Pro Lay Flat book

Features Laminated hardcover and 26 380gsm pages **Visit** www.photobox.co.uk



Thanks to the internet, photo books are easier than ever to produce, but very few tout the high-end features of the Pro Lay Flat, and even fewer at such a competitive price. After uploading your shots to the Photobox website, you can quickly take total control of its design using numerous customisable page templates, or automate the whole design process with an 'Instant Book' option. The Pro has 26 pages to fill as standard (£45), while additional pages can be added for £1.49. Manufactured using a Silver Halide printing process, and

lavishly thick 380gsm Crystal Archive Lustre paper, we were impressed with the quality of its finish. Thanks to lay flat pages, there is no deep gutter, meaning even panoramic shots looked fantastic. Completed by a laminated hardcover, and free presentation box, it feels premium, but remains affordable.

DIGITAL PHOTO Verdict

A pleasingly high quality photo book, without the professional price tag. We like it!

Rating



TRIED&TESTED

Used. Abused. Rated



Sun-Sniper 'The Steel' strap £44.95

Matt says I could never find a strap I liked until I tried 'The Steel' and its design is inspired by an 1885 US cavalry carbine sling! Suspending my camera so that it hangs at my side when not in use, it keeps gear accessible, but in a position that's out of the way. A steel wire also runs through its core, ensuring protection from theft. www.sun-sniper.com



Panasonic 64GB class 10 SDXC card £79.90

Andy says Since getting this card it has literally lived in my camera. Okay, so it's not cheap, but it is the perfect blend of space (enough for 8000 24Mp images) and speed, writing files at up to 45MB/s and reading them at 90MB/s. It's even quick enough to be used for 4K recording, something many alternatives just can't handle. www.panasonic.co.uk



SRB ND1000 circular filter From £24.99

Matty says Despite being much more affordable than many of the big-brand options, this filter went on to win our competitive 10-stop filter group test a few months ago. It's still impressing me with the quality it can produce. If I'm heading out to shoot some super long exposures, it's the first thing I pack. www.srb-photographic.co.uk

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| 11-24 F4 L USM | £2649 |
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| 16-35 F4 L IS USM | £679 |
| 17-40 F4 L USM | £498 |
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| 24 F1.4 L II USM | £1139 |
| 24 F2.8 IS USM | £419 |
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| 24-70 F2.8 L II USM | £1379 |
| 24-70 F4 L IS USM | £674 |
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| 24-105 F4 L IS USM no box | £699 |
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| 35 F1.4 USM LII | £1699 |
| 35 F2 IS USM | £389 |
| 40 F2.8 STM | £149 |
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|---------------------------|-------|
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| 16-35 F4 AFS VR | £828 |
| 18-35 F3.5/4.5 AFS G | £517 |
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| 24 F1.4 AFS | £1378 |
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| 35 F1.8 AFS G | £398 |
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| 50 F1.4 AFS G | £274 |
| 50 F1.8 AFS G | £155 |
| 58 F1.4 AFS G | £1299 |
| 60 F2.8 AFS | £369 |
| 70-200 F2.8 AFS VR II | £1578 |
| 70-200 F4 AFS G ED VR | £899 |
| 70-300 F4.5/5.6 AFS VR | £439 |
| 80-400 F4.5/5.6 AFS G VR | £1649 |
| 85 F1.4 AFS G | £1147 |
| 85 F1.8 AFS G | £338 |
| 105 F2.8 AFS VR macro | £619 |
| 200 F2.8 AFS ED VR II | £4099 |
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| 300 F2.8 AFS ED VR II | £3489 |
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| 500 F4 E AFS FL ED VR | £7989 |
| 600 F4 E AFS FL ED VR | £9648 |
| R1C1 CDR | £489 |
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| TC17EII converter | £289 |
| TC20EIII converter | £328 |

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| 18-300 F3.5/6.3 DC OS mac | £349 |
| 24 F1.4 DG HSM Art | £599 |
| 24-35 F2 DG HSM Art | £699 |
| 35 F1.4 DG HSM Art | £599 |
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| 120-300 F2.8 DG OS Sport | £2499 |
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After

Get a pen & wash style in lightning-quick time with this easy technique.

JON ADAMS / BAUER



MAKE A QUICK WATERCOLOUR



Before

Turning photos into paintings is a fun technique, but if you use brushes it can take an age. To find out how a picture looks with a painterly feel, try this – it only takes a minute...

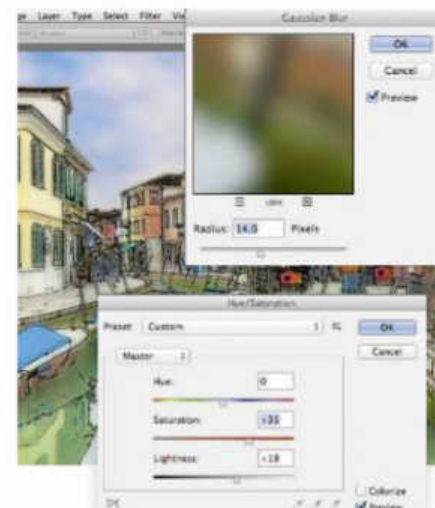
1 Make a sketch effect

Open your pic into Photoshop or Elements, and hit **Ctrl+J** twice to create two copy Layers. In the Layers panel (**Window→Layers**), click on the top Layer to make it active, and go to **Filter→Stylize→Find Edges**. You'll get a coloured outline, and to make it mono, hit **Ctrl+Shift+U**. Open **Levels** with **Ctrl+L** and move the sliders under the Histogram to get a simpler outline that looks a bit like a sketch effect. Click **OK**, then click where it says **Normal** and change the Blending Mode to **Multiply**.



2 Get the painted look

In the Layers panel, click on the middle Layer to make it active, then go to **Filter→Blur→Gaussian Blur**. Increase the **Radius** slider until the blur spills over the edges of the sketch effect. Now hit **Ctrl+U** and in the **Hue/Saturation** palette, increase the **Saturation** slider to get punchy colours. To separate the edge effect from the colourful Layer, now increase the **Lightness** slider a little, until the overall effect looks good. Click **OK** to finish, then save your pic under a new name via **File→Save As**.



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